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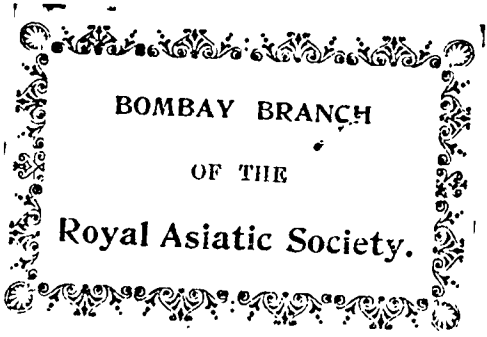

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GALLERIES

LITERARY PORTRAITS.

By GEORGE GILFILLAN.

COMPLETE IN TWO VOLUMES

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CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

Part Fourth.—Critics and Miscellaneous Writers.

	Page
Edmund Burke	1
William Hazlitt	15
Charles Lamb	25
William Cobbett	28
Lord Jeffrey	35
Sidney Smith	41
Delta	44
John Sterling	54
Professor Wilson	70
Hazlitt and Hallam	88
Jeffrey and Coleridge	96
Walter Savage Landor	101
Thomas Babington Macaulay	104
Thackeray	138
Lord Brougham	147
Thomas De Quincey	152
Professor Nichol	163
Carlyle and Sterling	172
Emerson	177
Smidert and the Highlands	182
George Dawson	188
Professor Spalding	196

Part Fifth.—Sacred Authors.

	Page
John Bunyan	206
Dr Johnson	217
John Foster	227
Robert Hall	245
Edward Irving, and the Preachers of the Day	257
Isaac Taylor	283
Hamilton of Leeds	293
William Anderson, Glasgow	298
Jameson of Methven	305
Neale and Bunyan	311
Dr Chalmers	317
Dr Arnold	339
Henry Rogers	351

LITERARY PORTRAITS.

Part Fourth.—Critics and Miscellaneous Writers.

EDMUND BURKE.

All hail to Edmund Burke, the greatest and least appreciated man of the eighteenth century, even as Milton had been the greatest and least appreciated man of the century before! Each century, in fact, bears its peculiarly great man, and as certainly either neglects or abuses him. Nor do after ages always repair the deficiency. For instance, between the writing of the first and the second sentences of this paper, we have happened to take up a London periodical, which has newly come in, and have found Burke first put at the feet of Fox, and, secondly, accused of being actuated in all his political conduct by two objects—those of places and pensions for himself and his family; so that our estimate of him, although late, may turn out, on the whole, a "word in season." It is, at all events refreshing for us to look back from the days of a Derby and a Biographer Russell, to those of the great and eloquent Burke, and to turn from the ravings of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," to the noble rage and magnificent philippics of a "Regicide Peace."

First of all, in this paper, we feel ourselves constrained to proclaim what, even yet, is not fully understood—Burke's unutterable superiority to all his parliamentary rivals. It was not simply th[illegible] was above them as one bough in a [illegible] above another, but above them as [illegible] is above the top of the tree. He wa[illegible] of their order." He had philosoph[illegible] tellect, while they had only arith[illegible] He had genius, while they had not [illegible] fancy. He had heart, while they [illegible] only passions. He had widest and m[illegible] comprehensive views; their minds [illegible] little real power of generalisation. [illegible] had religion; most of them were infi[illegible] of that lowest order, who imagine th[illegible] Christianity is a monster, bred betwe[illegible] priestcraft and political expediency. H[illegible] loved literature with his inmost soul; they (Fox on this point must be excepted) knew little about it, and carelessness. In a word, they were men of their time; he belonged to all ages, and his mind was as catholic as it was clear and vast.

Contrast the works and speeches of the men! Has a sentence of Pitt's ever been quoted as a maxim? Does one passage of Fox appear in even our common books of elocutionary extracts? Are Sheridan's flights remembered, except for their ambitious and adventurous badness? Unless one or two brilliant climaxes of Grattan and

Curran, what else of them is extant? How different with Burke! His works are to this hour burning with genius, and swarming with wisdom. You cannot open a page, without finding either a profound truth expressed in the shortest and sharpest form, looking up at you like an eye; or a brilliant image flashing across with the speed and splendour of a meteor; or a description, now grotesque, and now gorgeous; or a literary allusion, cooling and sweetening the fervour of the political discussion; or a quotation from the poets, so pointed and pat, that it assumes the rank of an original beauty. Burke's writing is almost unrivalled for its combination and dexterous interchange of excellences. It is by turns statistics, metaphysics, painting, poetry, eloquence, wit, and wisdom. It is so cool and so warm, so mechanical and so impulsive, so measured and so impetuous, so clear and so profound, so simple and so rich. Its sentences are now the shortest, and now the longest; now bare as Butler, and now figured as Jeremy Taylor; now conversational, and now ornate, intense, and elaborate in the highest degree. He *embodieses many of his paragraphs in a rush-ing thunder and fiery flood of eloquence,* and ceased to be the same being. Indeed, he is the least monotonous and manneristic of modern writers, and in this, as in so many other respects, excels such authors as Macaulay and Chalmers, who are sometimes absurdly compared to him. He has, in fact, as we hinted above, three, if not four or five, distinct styles, and possesses equal mastery over all. He exhibits specimens of the law-paper style, in his articles of charge against Warren Hastings; of the calm, sober, uncoloured argument, in his "Thoughts on the Present Discontents;" of the ingenious, high-finished, but temperate philosophical essay, in his "Sublime and Beautiful;" of the fiery diatribe, here storming into fierce scorn and invective, and there soaring into poetical eloquence, in his "Letter to a Noble Lord," and in his "Regicide Peace;" and of a style combining all these qualities, and which he uses in his Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts, and in his "Reflections on the French Revolution." Thus you may read a hundred pages of him at once, without finding any power but pure intellect at work, and at other times every sentence is starred with an image, even as every moment of some men's sleep is spiritualised by a dream; and, in many of them, figures cluster and crowd upon each other. It is remarkable that his imagination becomes apparently more powerful as he draws near the end of his journey. The reason of this probably was: he became more thoroughly in earnest towards the close. Till the trial of Warren Hastings, or even on to the outbreak of the French Revolution, he was a volcano speaking and snorting out fire at intervals—an Etna at ease; but from these dates he began to pour out incessant torrents of molten lava upon the wondering nations. Figures are a luxury to cool thinkers; they are a necessity to prophets. The Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel have no choice. Their thought MUST come forth with the fiery edge of metaphor around it.

Let us look, in the course of the remarks that follow, to the following points—to Burke's powers, to his possible achievements, to his actual works, to his oratory, to his conversation, to his private character, to his critics, and to the question, what has been the result of his influence as a writer and a thinker?

1. We would seek to analyse shortly his powers. These were distinguished at once by their variety, comprehensiveness, depth, harmony, and brilliance. He was endowed in the very "prodigality of heaven" with genius of a creative order, with boundless fertility of fancy, with piercing acuteness and comprehension of intellect, with a tendency leading him irresistibly down into the depths of every subject, and with an eloquence at once massive, profuse, fiery, and flexible. To these powers he united, what are not often found in their company, slow, plodding perseverance, indomitable industry, and a cautious, balancing disposition. We may apply to him the words of Scripture, "He could *mount* up with wings as

n eagle, he could *run* and not be weary, ne could *walk* and not be faint." Air, earth, and the things under the earth, were equally familiar to him; and you are amazed to see how easily he can fold up the mighty wings which had swept the ether, and "knit" the mountain to the sky, and turn to mole-like minings in the depths of the miry clay, which he found it necessary also to explore. These vast and various powers he had fed with the most extensive, most minute, most accurate, most artistically managed reading, with elaborate study, with the closest yet kindliest observation of human nature, and with free and copious intercourse with all classes of men. And to inspirit and inflame their action, there were a profound sense of public duty, ardent benevolence, the passions of a hot but generous heart, and a strong-felt, although uncanting and unostentatious piety.

2. His possible achievements. To what was a man like this, who could at once soar and dive, overtop the mountain, skim the surface, and explore the mine, not competent? He was, shall we say? a mental camelopard — patient as the camel, and as the leopard swift and richly spotted. We have only in his present works the fragments of his genius. Had he not in some measure,

> "Born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
> And to party given up what was meant for mankind,"

what works on general subjects had he written! It had been, perhaps, a system of philosophy, merging and kindling into poetry, resembling Brown's "Lectures," but informed by a more masculine genius; or it had been, perhaps, a treatise on the Science of Politics, viewed on a large and liberal scale; or it had been, perhaps, a history of his country, abounding in a truer philosophy and a more vivid narrative than Hume, and in pictures more brilliant than Macaulay's; or it had been, perhaps, a work on the profounder principles of literature or of art; or it had been, perhaps—for this, too, was in his power — some strain of solemn poetry, rising higher than Akenside or Thomson; or else some noble argument or apology for the faith that was in him in the blessed religion of Jesus. Any or all of these tasks we believe to have been thoroughly within the compass of Burke's universal mind, had his lot been otherwise cast, and had his genius not been so fettered by circumstance and subject, that he seems at times a splendid generaliser in chains.

3. These decided views, as to the grand possibilities of this powerful spirit, must not be permitted to blind us to what he has actually done. This, alike in quantity and in quality, challenges our wonder. Two monster octavos of his works are lying before us; and we believe that, besides, there is extant matter from his pen equal to another volume. What strikes you most about the quality of his writing, is the amazing restlessness and richness of his thought. His book is an ant-hill of stirring, swarming, blackening ideas and images. His style often reposes — his mind never. Hall very unjustly accuses him of amplification. There are, indeed, a few passages of superb amplification sprinkled through his writings; but this is rarely his manner, and you never, as in some writers, see a thought small as the body of a wren suspended between the wings of an eagle. He has too much to say, to care in general about expanding or beating it thin. Were he dallying long with, or seeking to distend an image, a hundred more would become impatient for their turn. Foster more truly remarks, "Burke's sentences are pointed at the end—instinct with pungent sense to the last syllable; they are like a charioteer's whip, which not only has a long and effective lash, but cracks and inflicts a still smarter sensation at the end. They are like some serpents, whose life is said to be fiercest in the tail." It is a mind full to overflowing, pouring out, now calmly and now in tumult and heat, now deliberately and now in swift torrents, its thoughts, feelings, acquirements, and speculations. This rich restlessness might, by and by, become oppressive, were it not for the masterly ease of manner, and the great variety as well as quantity of think-

ing. He never harps too long on one string. He is perpetually making swift and subtle transitions from the grave to the gay, from the severe to the lively, from facts to figures, from statistics to philosophical speculations, from red-hot invective to caustic irony, from the splendid filth of his abuse to the flaming cataracts of his eloquence and poetry. His manner of writing has been accused of "caprice," but unjustly. Burke was a great speculator on style, and was regulated in most of its movements by the principles of art, as well as impelled by the force of genius. He held, for instance, that every great sentence or paragraph should contain a thought, a sentiment, and an image; and we find this rule attended to in all his more elaborate passages. He was long thought a "flowery and showy" writer, and contrasted, by Parr and others, unfavourably with such writers as MacIntosh and even Paine. Few now will have the hardihood to reiterate such egregious nonsense. His flowers were, indeed, numerous; but they sprang out naturally, and were the bloom of deep and noble thought. We call the foam of a little river "froth," that of Niagara, or the ocean, "spray." Burke's imagination was the giant spray of a giant stream, and his fancy resembled the rainbows which often appear suspended in it. Besides all this, he had unlimited command of words and allusions, culled from every science, and art, and page of history; and this has rendered, and will ever render, his writings legible by those who care very little for his political opinions, and have slender interest in the causes he won or lost. His faults were not numerous, although very palpable. He cannot always reason with calm consecutiveness. He sometimes permits, not so much his imagination, as his morbidly active intellect and his fierce passions, to run him into extravagance. He lays often too much stress upon small causes, although this sprung from what was one of his principal powers — that of generalising from the particular, and, Cuvier-like, seeing entire mammoths in small and single bones. He is occasionally too truculent in his invective, and too personal in h satire. His oracular tone is sometime dogmatic and offensive; and he frequentl commits errors of taste, especially whe his descriptions verge upon the humorous for, Irishman though he was, his wit an humour, although great, were not quit equal to his other powers.

We select three from among his productions for short special criticism: his "Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts," his "Reflections on the French Revolution," and his "Letters on a Regicide Peace." The first is probably the most complete oration in literature. Henry Rogers, indeed, prefers the speeches of Demosthenes, as higher specimens of pure oratory; and so they are, if you take oratory, in a limited sense, as the art of persuasion and immediate effect. But Burke's speech, if not in this sense equal to the "Pro Corona," even as Milton's "Areopagitica" is not in this sense equal to Sheridan on the "Begum Charge," is, in all other elements which go to constitute the excellence of a composition, incomparably superior. You see a great mind meeting with a great subject, and intimate with it, in all its length, and breadth, and depth, and thickness; here diving down into its valleys, and there standing serene upon its heights; here ranging at ease through its calms, and there, with tyrant nerve, ruling its storms of passion and harrowing interest. The picture of Hyder Ali, and of the "Cloud" which burst upon the plains of the Carnatic, has been subjected to Brougham's clumsy and captious criticism, but has come out unscathed; and we venture to say, that in massive, unforced magnificence it remains unsurpassed. There is no trick, no heaving effort, no "double, double toil and trouble," as in many o Lord Brougham's own elaborate passages. The flight is as calm and free, as it is majestic and powerful:

> "Sailing with supreme dominion,
> Through the azure deep of air."

His "Reflections" was certainly the most powerful pamphlet ever written, if pamphlet it can be called, which is only a

pamphlet in form, but a book in reality. It should have been called a "Reply to the French Revolution." The volcano-voice of a great nation had spoken, and this was the voice of a great man answering in feebler, but still strong and far-heard thunder. Its power was proved by its effect. It did not, indeed, create the terror of Europe against that dreadful Shape of Democracy which had arisen over its path, and by its shadow had turned all the waters into blood; but it condensed, pointed, and propelled the comm.on fear and horror into active antagonism with its opponent. It sharpened the prevailing desire for the fight. It was the first wild, wailing trumpet of a battle-field of twenty-four years' duration. One is reminded of the contest between Fingal and the Spirit of Loda. There seemed, at first, a great disparity between the solitary warrior and the dreadful Form riding upon the midnight tempest, and surrounded with his panoply of clouds. But the warrior was *ipse agmen*—his steel was sharp and true; he struck at the Demon, and the Demon shrieked, rolled himself together, and retired a space, to return, however, again, with his painful wound healed, and the fury of his blasts aggravated, when there was no Burke to oppose him. The merits of this production are, we think, greatly enhanced by the simplicity of the vehicle in which its thoughts ride. The book is a letter—but such a letter! In this simplest shape of literature, we find philosophy the most subtle; invective the most sublime; speculation the most far-stretching; Titanic ridicule, like the cachinnation of a Cyclops; piercing pathos; powerful historic painting; and eloquence the most dazzling that ever combined depth with splendour. That it is the ultimate estimate of the French Revolution, is contended for by no one. THAT shall only be seen after the history of earth is ended, and after it is all inscribed (to allude to the beautiful Arabian fable) in laconics of light over "Allah's head;" but, meantime, while admitting that Burke's view of it is in some points one-sided, and in others coloured by prejudice, we contend that he has, with general fidelity, painted the thing as it then was—the bloody bantling as he saw it in the cradle—although he did not foresee that circumstances and events were greatly to modify and soften its features as it advanced. Let him have praise, at least, for this, that he discerned and exposed the true character of modern infidelity, which, amid all the disguises it has since assumed, is still, and shall remain till its destruction, the very monster of vanity, vice, malignity, and sciolism, which he has, by a few touches of lightning, shown it to be. How thoroughly he comprehended the devil-inspired monkey, Voltaire; the winged frog, Rousseau; that iron machine of artistic murder, Carnot; La Fayette, the republican coxcomb; and that rude incarnation of the genius of the guillotine, Robespierre! Through those strange Satanic shapes he moves in the majesty of his virtue and his manly genius; like a lofty human being through the corner of a museum appropriated to monsters—not doing violence to his own senses, by seeking to include them in the catalogue of men, nor in an attitude of affected pity and transcendental charity—but feeling and saying, "How ugly and detestable these miscreations are, and, faugh! what a stench they emit."

In a similar spirit, and with even greater power, does he seek to exorcise the evil spirit of his times, in his "Letters on a Regicide Peace." These glorious fragments employed his last hours, and the shadow of the grave lies solemnly upon them. When he wrote them, although far from being a very old man (he was just sixty-four), yet the curtains of his life's hope had suddenly been dropped around him. It was not that he and his old friends, the Whigs, had quarrelled; it was not that he had stood by the death-bed of Johnson, and had undergone the far severer pang which attended his divorce from the friendship of Fox; it was not that his circumstances were straitened; it was not that his motives were misrepresented; it was not that "misery had made him acquainted with strange bed-fellows," and driven him to herd with

beings so inferior and radically different as Pitt and Dundas—but it was that death had snatched away him in whom he had "garnered up his heart"—his son. Be it that that son was not all his father had thought him to be, to others—he *was* it all to him. If not rich himself, was it nothing that his father had lavished on him his boundless wealth of esteem and affection? As it is, he shines before us in the light of his father's eloquence for evermore. Strange and enviable this power of genius! It can not only "give us back the dead even in the loveliest looks they wore," but it can give them a loveliness they never possessed; it can dignify the obscure, it can illuminate the dark, it can embalm the decayed; and, in its transforming splendour, the common worm becomes a glow-worm, the common cloud a cloud of fire and glory, every arch a rainbow, every spark a star, and every star a sun. It can preserve obscure sorrows, and the obscurer causes of these sorrows, and hang a splendour in the tears of childhood, and eternise the pathos of those little pangs which rend little hearts. How De Quincey, for example, has beautified the sorrows, and peculiarities, and small adventures of his boyhood—and in what a transfiguring beam of imagination does he show the dead face of his dear sister, Elizabeth! And thus young Burke sleeps, at once guarded and glorified, beneath the bright angel-wings of his father's mighty genius.

It is most affecting to come upon those plaintive expressions of desolation which abound in Burke's later works, as where he calls himself an "unhappy man," and wishes to be permitted to "enjoy in his retreat the melancholy privileges of obscurity and sorrow;" and where he compares himself to an "old oak stripped of his honours, and torn up by the roots." But not for nothing were these griefs permitted to environ him. Through the descending cloud, a mighty inspiration stooped down upon his soul. Grief roused, bared, and tossed up his spirit to its very depths. He compares himself to Job, lying on his dunghill, and insulted by the miserable comfort of his friends. And as Job's silent anguish broke out at last into sublime curses, and his dunghill heaved up into a burning prophetic peak, so it was with the "old man eloquent" before us. From his solitary Beaconsfield, with its large trees moaning around, as if in sympathy with his incommunicable sorrow, he uttered prophetic warnings, which startled Europe; he threw forth pearls of deepest thought and purest eloquence; he blew war-blasts of no uncertain sound, to which armies were to move, and navies to expand their vast white wings; he poured out plaints of sorrow, which melted the hearts of millions; his "lightnings also he shot out," forked bolts of blasting invective, against the enemies or pretended friends, the impostors high or low, who dared to intrude on his sacred solitude; and it fared alike with a Duke of Bedford and a Thomas Paine, as with the rebel angels in Milton:—

"On each wing
Uriel and Raphael, his vaunting foe,
Though huge, and in a rock of diamond arm'd,
Vanquish'd Adramelech and Asmadai,
Two potent thrones that to be less than gods
Disdain'd, but meaner thoughts learn'd in their flight,
Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
The atheist crew, but, with redoubled blow,
Ariel and Arioch, and the violence
Of Ramiel scorch'd and blasted, overthrew."

But he had not only the inspiration of profound misery, but that also of approaching death. He knew that he was soon to die, and the motto of all his later productions might have been, "Moriturus vos saluto." This gave a deeper tone to his tragic warnings, a higher dignity to his prophetic attitude, and a weightier emphasis to his terrible denunciations. He reminded men of that wild-eyed prophet, who ran around the wall of doomed Jerusalem till he sank down in death, and cried out, "Wo, wo, wo, to this city." In the utterance of such wild, but musical and meaning cries, did Burke breathe out his spirit.

The "Regicide Peace" contains no passages so well known as some in the "Re-

flections," but has, on the whole, a profounder vein of thinking, a bolder imagery, a richer and more peculiar language, as well as certain long and high-wrought paragraphs, which have seldom been surpassed. Such is his picture of Carnot, "snorting away the fumes of the undigested blood of his sovereign;" his comparison of the revolutionary France to Algiers; his description of a supposed entrance of the Regicide ambassadors into London; and the magnificent counsels he gives Pitt as to what he thought *should* have been his manner of conducting the war. As we think this one of the noblest swells of poetic prose in the language, and have never seen it quoted, or even alluded to by former critics, we shall give it entire:—

"After such an elaborate display had been made of the injustice and insolence of an enemy, who seems to have been irritated by every one of the means which had commonly been used with effect to soothe the rage of intemperate power, the natural result would be, that the scabbard, in which we in vain attempted to plunge our sword, should have been thrown away with scorn. It would have been natural, that, rising in the fulness of their might, insulted majesty, despised dignity, violated justice, rejected supplication, patience goaded into fury, would have poured out all the length of the reins upon all the wrath they had so long restrained. It might have been expected, that, emulous of the glory of the youthful hero (Archduke Charles of Austria) in alliance with him, touched by the example of what one man, well formed and well placed, may do in the most desperate state of affairs, convinced there is a courage of the cabinet full as powerful, and far less vulgar, than that of the field, our minister would have changed the whole line of that useless, prosperous prudence, which had hitherto produced all the effects of the blindest temerity. If he found his situation full of danger (and I do not deny that it is perilous in the extreme), he must feel that it is also full of glory, and that he is placed on a stage, than which no muse of fire, that had ascended the highest heaven of invention, could imagine anything more awful and august. It was hoped that, in this swelling scene in which he moved, with some of the first potentates of Europe for his fellow-actors, and with so many of the rest for the anxious spectators of a part which, as he plays it, determines for ever their destiny and his own, like Ulysses in the unravelling point of the epic story, he would have thrown off his patience and his rags together, and, stripped of unworthy disguises, he would have stood forth in the form and in the attitude of a hero. On that day it was thought he would have assumed the port of Mars; that he would have bid to be brought forth from their hideous kennel (where his scrupulous tenderness had too long immured them) those impatient dogs of war, *whose fierce regards affright even the minister of vengeance that feeds them;* that he would let them loose, in famine, fever, plagues, and death, upon a guilty race, to whose frame, and to all whose habit, order, peace, religion, and virtue are alien and abhorrent. It was expected that he would at last have thought of active and effectual war; that he would no longer amuse the British lion in the chase of rats and mice; that he would no longer employ the whole naval power of Great Britain, once the terror of the world, to prey upon the miserable remains of a peddling commerce, which the enemy did not regard, and from which none could profit. It was expected that he would have re-asserted the justice of his cause; that he would have re-animated whatever remained to him of his allies, and endeavoured to recover those whom their fears had led astray; that he would have rekindled the martial ardour of his citizens; that he would have held out to them the example of their ancestry, the assertor of Europe, and the scourge of French ambition; that he would have reminded them of a posterity, which, if this nefarious robbery, under the fraudulent name and false colour of a government, should in full power be seated in the heart of Europe, must for ever be consigned to vice, impiety, barbarism, and the most

ignominious slavery of body and mind. In so holy a cause, it was presumed that he would (as in the beginning of the war he did) have opened all the temples, and, with prayer, with fasting, and with supplication (better directed than to the grim Moloch of regicide in France), have called upon us to raise that united cry which has so often stormed heaven, and, *with a pious violence, forced down blessings upon a repentant people.* It was hoped that, when he had invoked upon his endeavours the favourable regards of the Protector of the human race, it would be seen that his menaces to the enemy, and his prayers to the Almighty, were not followed, but accompanied, with corresponding action. It was hoped that his shrilling trumpet should be heard, not to announce a show, but to sound a charge."

We come now to him as an orator. And here we must correct a prevailing misconception. Many seem to imagine that he had no power of oratorical impression; that he was a mere "dinner-bell;" and that all his speeches, however splendid, fell still-born from his lips. So far was this from being the case, that his very first orations in Parliament—those, namely, on the Stamp Act—delivered when he had yet a reputation to make, according to Johnson, "filled the town with wonder;" an effect which, we fancy, their mere merit, if unaccompanied by some energy and interest of delivery, could hardly have produced. So long as as he was in office under Lord Rockingham, and under the Coalition Ministry, he was listened to with deference and admiration. His speech against Hastings was waited for with greater eagerness, and heard with greater admiration, than any of that brilliant series, except, perhaps, Sheridan's on the Begum Charge; and in its closing passage, impeaching Hastings "in the name of Human Nature itself," it rose, even as to effect, to a height incomparably above any of the rest. His delivery, indeed, and voice were not first rate, but only fribbles or fools regard such things much, or at least long, in a true orator; and when Burke became fully roused, his minor defects were always either surmounted by himself, or forgotten by others. The real secret of his parliamentary unpopularity, in his latter years, lay, first, in the envy with which his matchless powers were regarded; secondly, in his fierce and ungovernable temper, and the unguarded violence of his language; thirdly, in the uncertainty of his position and circumstances; and, lastly, in the fact, as Johnson has it, that "while no one could deny that he spoke well, yet all granted that he spoke too often and too long." His soul, besides, generally soared above his audience, and sometimes forgot to return. In honest Goldsmith's version of it,

> "Too deep for his hearers, he went on refining,
> And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining."

But he could never be put down to the last, and might, had he chosen, have contested the cheap palm of instant popularity even with the most voluble of his rivals. But the "play was not worth the candle." He mingled, indeed, with their temporary conflicts; but it was like a god descending from Ida to the plains of Troy, and sharing in the vulgar shock of arms, with a high celestial purpose in view. He was, in fact, over the heads of the besotted parliaments of his day, addressing the ears of all future time, and has not been inaudible in *that* gallery.

Goldsmith is right in saying that so far he "narrowed his mind." But, had he narrowed it a little farther, he could have produced so much the more of immediate impression, and so much the more have circumscribed his future influence and power. He *was* by nature what Clootz pretended to be, and what all genuine speakers should aim at being, "an orator of the human race," and he never altogether lost sight of this his high calling. Hence, while a small class adored him, and a large class respected, the majority found his speaking apart from their purpose, and if they listened to it, it was from a certain vague impression that it was something great and splendid, only not very intelligible, and not at all practical. In fact, the brilliance of his imagination, and the restless play of his in-

genuity, served often to conceal the solid depth and practical bearings of his wisdom. Men seldom give a famous man credit for all the faculties he possesses. If they dare not deny his genius, they deny his sense; or, if they are obliged to admit his sense, they question his genius. If he is strong, he cannot be beautiful, and if beautiful, he must be weak. That Burke suffered much from this false and narrow style of criticism, is unquestionable; but that he was ever the gigantic bore on the floor of the House of Commons which some pretend, we venture to doubt. The fact was probably this—on small matters he was thought prosy, and coughed down, but, whenever there was a large load to be lifted, a great question to be discussed—a Hastings to be crushed, or a French revolution to be analysed—the eyes of the House instinctively turned to the seat where the profound and brilliant man was seated, and their hearts irresistibly acknowledged, at times, what their tongues and prejudices often denied.

And yet it is amusing to find, from a statement of Burke's own, that the Whigs whom he had deserted solaced themselves for the unparalleled success of the "Reflections on the French Revolution," by underrating it in a literary point of view. Is this the spirit of real or of mock humility in which he speaks, in his "Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs?" "The gentlemen who in the name of the party have passed sentence on Mr Burke's book in the light of literary criticism, are judges above all challenge. He did not indeed flatter himself that, as a writer, he could claim the approbation of men whose talents, in his judgment and in the public judgment, approach to prodigies, if ever such persons should be disposed to estimate the merit of a composition upon the standard of their own ability." Surely this must be ironical, else it would seem an act of voluntary humility as absurd as though De Quincey were deferring in matters of philosophy or style to the "superior judgment" of some of our American or St Andrews made doctors. Pretty critics they were! Think of the glorious eloquence, wisdom, passion, and poetry, the "burning coals of juniper, sharp arrows of the strong," to be found in every page of the "Reflections," sneered at by two men, at least, not one of whose works is now read—by the writer of a farrago like the "Spital Sermon," or by the author of such illegible dulness as the "History of James II.," or even by Sheridan, with his clever, heartless plays, and the brilliant falsetto of his speeches; or even by MacIntosh, with the rhetorical logic and forced flowers of his "Vindiciæ Gallicæ." Surely Burke did, in his heart, appeal from their tribunal to that of a future age. To do MacIntosh justice, he learned afterwards to form a far loftier estimate of the author of the "Reflections." He was, soon after the publication of his "Vindiciæ Gallicæ," invited to spend some days at Beaconsfield. There he found the old giant, now toying on the carpet with little children, now cracking bad jokes and the vilest of puns, and now pouring out magnificent thoughts and images. In the course of a week's animated discussion on the French Revolution, and many cognate subjects, MacIntosh was completely converted to Burke's views, and came back impressed with an opinion of his genius and character far higher than his writings had given him. Indeed, his speech in defence of Peltier—by much the most eloquent of his published speeches—bears on it the fiery traces of the influence which Burke had latterly exerted on his mind. The early sermons, too, and the "Apology for the Liberty of the Press," by Hall, are less coloured, than created by the power which Burke's writings had exerted on his dawning genius. But more of this afterwards.

What a pity that Boswell had not been born a twin, and that the brother had not attached himself as fondly and faithfully to Burke, as Jemmy to Johnson! Boswell's Life of Burke would *now* have been even more popular than Boswell's Life of Johnson. For, if Johnson's sayings were more pointed and witty, Burke's were profounder and sublimer far. Johnson had lived as much with books and with certain classes of men, but Burke

had conversed more with the silent company of thoughts; and all grand generalisations were to him palpable, familiar, and life-like as a gallery of pictures. Johnson was a lazy, slumbering giant, seldom moving himself except to strangle the flies which buzzed about his nostrils; Burke wrought like a Cyclops in his cave. Johnson, not Burke, was the master of amplification, from no poverty, but from indolence: he often rolled out sounding surges of commonplace, with no bark and little beauty, upon the swell of the wave; Burke's mind, as we have seen before, was morbidly active; it was impatient of circular movement round an idea, or of noise and agitation without progress: his motto ever was "Onwards!" and his eloquence always bore the stamp of thought. Johnson looked at all things through an atmosphere of gloom; Burke was of a more sanguine temperament; and if cobwebs did at any time gather, the breath of his anger or of his industry speedily blew them away. Johnson had mingled principally with scholars, or the middle class of the community; Burke was brought early into contact with statesmen, the nobility and gentry, and this told both upon his private manners and upon his knowledge of human nature. Johnson's mind was of the sharp, strong, sturdy order; Burke's, of the subtle, deep, revolving sort; as Goldsmith said, he "wound into every subject like a serpent." Both were honest, fearless, and pious men; but, while Burke's honesty sometimes put on a court dress, and his fearlessness sometimes "licked the dust," and his piety could stand at ease, Johnson in all these points was ever roughly and nakedly the same. Johnson, in wit, the point of individual sentences, and in solemn pictures of human life, its sorrows and frailties, was above Burke; but was as far excelled by him in power of generalisation, vastness of range and reading, exuberance of fancy, daring rhetoric, and in skilful management and varied cadence of style. Johnson had a philosophical vein, but it had never received much culture; Burke's had been carefully fed, and failed only at times through the subjects to which it was directed. Johnson's talk, although more brilliant, memorable, and imposing, was also more set, starched, and produced with more effort than Burke's, who seemed to talk admirably because he could not help it, or, as his great rival said, "because his mind was full." Johnson was, notwithstanding his large proportions, of the earth earthy, after all; his wings, like those of the ostrich, were not commensurate with his size; Burke, to vast bulk and stature, added pinions which bore him from peak to peak, and from one gorgeous tract of "cloudland" to another.

Boswell and Prior have preserved only a few specimens of Burke's conversation, which are, however, so rich as to excite deep regret that more has not been retained; and a conviction that his traditional reputation has not been exaggerated, and that his talk was the truest revelation of his powers. Every one knows the saying of Dr Johnson, that you could not go with Burke under a shed to shun a shower, without saying, "this is an extraordinary man." Nor was this merely because he could talk cleverly and at random, on all subjects, and hit on brilliant things; but that he seemed to have weighed and digested his thoughts, and prepared and adjusted his language on all subjects, at the same time that impulse and excitement were ever ready to sprinkle splendid impromptus upon the stream of his speech. He combined the precision and perfect preparation of the lecturer, with the ease and fluency of the conversationist. He did not, like some, go on throwing out shining paradoxes; or, with others, hot gorgeous metaphors, hatched between excitement and vanity; or, with others, give prepared and polished orations, disguised in the likeness of extempore harangues; or, with others, perpetually strive to startle, to perplex, to mystify, and to shine. Burke's talk was that of a thoroughly furnished, gifted, and profoundly informed man, *thinking aloud*. His conversation was just the course of a great, rich river, winding at its sweet or its wild will—always full, often overflow-

ing; sometimes calm, and sometimes fretted and fierce; sometimes level and deep, and sometimes starred with spray, or leaping into cataracts; sometimes rolling through rich alluvial plains, and sometimes through defiles of romantic interest. Who shall venture to give us an "Imaginary Conversation" between him and Johnson, on the subject referred to by Boswell, about the comparative merits of Homer and Virgil, or on some similar topic, in a style that shall adequately represent the point, roughness, readiness, and sense of the one, and the subtlety, varied knowledge, glares of sudden metaphoric illumination crossing the veins of profound reflection, which distinguished the other—the "no, sirs," and the "therefores" of the one, with the "buts," the "unlesses," and the terrible "excuse me, sirs," of the other? We wonder that Savage Landor has never attempted it, and brought in poor Burns—the only man then living in Britain quite worthy to be a third party in the dialogue—now to shed his meteor light upon the matter of the argument; and now, by his wit or song, to soothe and harmonise the minds of the combatants.

Burke's talk is now, however, as a whole, irrecoverably lost. What an irrepressible sigh escapes us, as we reflect that this is true of so many noble spirits! Their works may remain with us, but that fine aroma which breathed in their conversation, that inspired beam which shone in their very eyes, are for ever gone. Some of the first of men, indeed, have had nothing to lose in this respect. Their conversation was inferior to their general powers. Their works were evening shadows, more gigantic than themselves. We have, at least, their essence preserved in their writings. This probably is true even of Shakspere and Milton. But Johnson, Burke, Burns, and Coleridge, were so constituted, that conversation was the only magnet that could draw out the full riches of their genius; and all of them would have required each his own Siamese twin to have accompanied him through life, and, with the pen and the patience of Bozzy, to have preserved the continual outpourings of their fertile brains and fluent tongues. We are not, however, arguing their superiority to the two just mentioned, or to others of a similar stamp, whose writings were above their talk—far the reverse—but are simply asserting, that we may regret more the comparative meagreness of biography in the case of the one class than of the other.

Burke, in private, was unquestionably one of the most blameless of the eminent men of his day. He was, in all his married life at least, entirely free from the licentiousness of Fox, the dissipation of Sheridan, and the hard-drinking habits of Pitt. But he was also the most amiable and actively benevolent of them. Wise as a serpent, he was harmless as a dove; and, when the deep sources of his virtuous indignation were not touched, gentle as a lamb. Who has forgot his fatherly interest in poor Crabbe—that flower blushing and drooping unseen, till Burke lifted it up in his hand, and gave his protegé bread and immortality? or his kindness to rough, thankless Barry, whom he taught and counselled as wisely as if he had been a prophet of art, not politics, and as if he had studied nothing else but painting (proving thus, besides his tender heart, that a habit and power of deep and genuine thinking can easily be transferred from one branch to all, a truth substantiated, besides, by the well-known aid he gave Sir Joshua Reynolds in his lectures); or last, not least, his treatment of the wretched street-stroller he met, took home, introduced, after hearing her story, to Mrs Burke, who watched over, reformed, and employed her in her service? "These are deeds which must not pass away." Like green laurels on the bald head of a Cæsar, they add a beauty and softness to the grandeur of Burke's mind, and leave you at a loss (fine balance! rare alternative! compliment, like a biforked sunbeam, cutting two ways!) whether more to love or to admire him. Fit it was that HE should have passed that noble panegyric on Howard, the "Circumnavigator of Charity," which now stands, and shall long

stand, like a mountain before its black and envious shadow, over against Carlyle's late unhappy attack on the unrivalled philanthropist.

We promised a word on Burke's critics. They have been numerous and various:—from Johnson, Fox, Laurence, MacIntosh, Wordsworth, Brougham, Hazlitt, Macaulay, De Quincey, Croly, H. Rogers, &c., down to Prior, &c. Johnson gave again and again his sturdy verdict in his favour, which was more valuable then than it is now. "If I were," he said, when once ill and unable to talk, "to meet that fellow Burke to-night, it would kill me." Fox admitted that he had learned more from Burke's conversation, than from all his reading and experience put together. Laurence, one of his executors, has left recorded his glowing sense of his friend's genius and virtues. Of MacIntosh's admiration we have spoken above; although, in an article which appeared in the "Edinburgh Review," somewhere in 1830, he seems to modify his approbation; induced to this, partly, perhaps, by the influences of Holland House, and partly by those chills of age which, falling on the higher genius and nature of Burke, served only to revive and stimulate him, but which damped whatever glow MacIntosh once had. Wordsworth's lofty estimate is given in Lord John Russell's recent Biography of Moore, and serves not only to prove what his opinion was, but to establish a strong distinction between the mere *dilettante litterateur* like Canning, and the mere statesman like Pitt, and a man who, like Burke, combined the deepest knowledge of politics, and the most unaffected love for literature and literary men. Brougham's estimate, in his "Statesmen," &c., is not exactly unfair, but fails, first, through his lordship's profound unlikeness, in heart, kind of culture, taste, and genius, to the subject of his critique—(Burke, to name two or three distinctions, was always a careful, while Brougham is often an extempore, thinker. Burke is a Cicero, and something far more; Brougham aspires to be a Demosthenes, and is something far less. Burke reasons philosophically—a mode of ratiocination which, as we have seen, can be employed with advantage on almost all subjects; Brougham reasons geometrically, and is one of those who, according to Aristotle, are sure to err when they turn their mathematical method to moral or mental themes. Burke's process of thought resembles the swift synthetic algebra; Brougham's, the slow, plodding, geometric analysis. Burke had prophetic insight, earnestness, and poetic fire; Brougham has marvellous acuteness, the earnestness of passion, and the fire of temperament. Burke had genuine imagination; Brougham has little or none); and, secondly, through his prodigious exaggeration of Burke's rivals, who, because they were near and around, appear to him cognate and equal, if not superior; even as St Peter's is said to be lessened in effect by some tall but tasteless buildings in the neighbourhood; and as the giant Ben Macdhui was long concealed by the lofty but subordinate hills which crush in around him. Hazlitt, Macaulay, and De Quincey have all seen Burke in a truer light, and praised him in the spirit of a more generous and richer recognition. Hazlitt has made, he tells us, some dozen attempts to describe Burke's style, without pleasing himself—so subtle and evasive he found its elements, and so strange the compound in it of matter-of-fact speculation, and poetic eloquence. His views of him, too, veered about several times—at least they seem very different in his papers in the "Edinburgh Review," and in his acknowledged essays; although we believe that at heart he always admired him to enthusiasm, and is often his unconscious imitator. Macaulay has also a thorough appreciation of Burke. De Quincey, following in this Coleridge, has felt, and eloquently expressed, his immeasurable contempt for those who praise Burke's fancy at the expense of his intellect. Dr Croly has published a "Political Life of Burke," full of eloquence and fervid panegyric, as well as of strong discrimination; Burke is manifestly his master, nor has he found an unworthy disciple. Henry Rogers has edited and prefaced an editio.

of Burke's works, but the prefixed essay, although able, is hardly worthy of the author of "Reason and Faith," and its eloquence is of a laborious, mechanical sort. And Hall has, in his "Apology for the Liberty of the Press," which was in part a reply to the "Reflections," painted him by a few beautiful touches, less true, however, than they are beautiful; and his pamphlet, although carefully modelled on the writings of his opponent, is not to be named beside them in depth, compass of thought, richness of imagery, or variety and natural vigour of style: his splendour, compared to Burke's, is stiff; his thinking and his imagery imitative—no more than in the case of Macaulay, do you ever feel yourself in contact with a "great virgin mind," melting down through the heat and weight of its own exhaustless wealth, although, in absence of fault, dignity of manner, and occasional polished felicities of expression, Hall is superior even to Burke.

That Burke *was* Junius, we do not believe: but that Burke HAD TO DO with the composition of some of these celebrated letters, we are as certain as if we had seen his careful front, and dim but searching eyes looking through his spectacles over the M.S. He was notoriously (see Prior's Life) in the secret of their authorship. Johnson thought him the only man then alive capable of writing them. Hall's objection, that "Burke's great power was amplification, while that of Junius was condensation," sprung, as we have said before, from a totally mistaken idea of the very nature of Burke's mind. There is far more condensed thinking and writing in many parts of Burke than in Junius—the proof of which is, that no prose writer in the language, except, perhaps, Dean Swift, has had so many single sentences so often quoted. That the *motion* of the mind of Junius differs materially from Burke's, is granted; but we could account for this (even although we contended, which we do not, that he was the sole author), from the different position in which the Anonymous might have placed him. The mask might confine as well as disguise him. Many of the best things in "Junius" are in one of Burke's manners; for, as we have seen, many manners and styles were his. He said to Boswell, in reference to Croft's "Life of Young," "it is not a good imitation of Johnson: he has the nodosities of the oak, without its strength —the contortions of the sibyl, without her inspiration." Junius says of Sir W. Draper, "he has all the melancholy madness of poetry, without the inspiration." How like to many sentences in Burke are such expressions as these (speaking of Wilkes):—"the gentle breath of peace would leave him on the surface, unruffled and unremoved; it is only the tempest which lifts him from his place." We could quote fifty pithy sentences from Junius and from Burke, which, placed in parallel columns, would convince an unprejudiced critic that they came from the same mind.* It is the union in both of point, polish, and concentration—a union reminding you of the deep yet shining sentences of Tacitus—that establishes the identity. Junius has two salts in his style—the sal acridum, and the sal Atticum. Sir Philip Francis was equal to the supply of the first; Burke alone to that of the second. It adds to the evidence for this theory, that Burke was fond of anonymous writing, and that in it he occasionally "changed his voice," and personated other minds: think of his "Vindication of Natural Society in the

* Amid the innumerable full-grown beauties, or even hints of beauties, borrowed by after-writers from Burke, we have just noticed one, which MacIntosh, in his famous letter to Hall, has appropriated without acknowledgment. It is where he speaks of Hall turning from literature, &c., to the far nobler task of "*remembering the forgotten*," &c. This grand simplicity, of which MacIntosh was altogether incapable, may be found in Burke's panegyric on Howard. Indeed, we wish we had time to go over Burke's works, and to prove that a vast number of the profound or brilliant things that have since been uttered (disguised or partially altered), in most of our favourite writers on grave subjects, present and past, are *stolen* from the great fountain mind of the eighteenth century. We may do so on some future occasion; and let the plagiarists tremble! Enough at present.

Manner of Lord Bolingbroke." He often, too, assisted other writers *sub rosa*, such as Barry and Reynolds, in their prelections on painting. We believe, in short, this to be the truth on the subject: he was in the confidence of the Junius Club —for a club it probably was; he overlooked many of the letters (Prior asserts that he once or twice spoke of what was to be the substance of a letter the day before it appeared); and he supplied many of his inimitable touches, just as Lord Jeffrey was wont to add spice even to some of his best contributors' articles in the "Edinburgh Review." So that he could thus very safely and honestly deny, as he repeatedly did, that he was the author of Junius, and yet be connected with the authorship of the letters.

We come, lastly, to speak of the influence which Burke has exerted upon his and our times. This has been greater than most even of his admirers believe. He was one of the few parent minds which the world has produced. Well does Burns call him "*Daddie* Burke." And both politics and literature owe filial obligations to his unbounded genius. In politics he has been the father of moderate Conservatism, which is, at least, a tempering of Toryism, if not its sublimation. That conservatism in politics and in church matters exists now in Britain, is, we believe, mainly owing to the genius of two men—Burke and Coleridge. In literature, too, he set an example that has been widely followed. He unintentionally, and by the mere motion of his powerful mind, broke the chains in which Johnson was binding our style and criticism, without, however, going back himself, or leading back others, to the laxity of the Addisonian manner. All good and vigorous English styles since—that of Godwin, that of Foster, that of Hall, that of Horsley, that of Coleridge, that of Jeffrey, that of Hazlitt, that of De Quincey, that of the "Times" newspaper —are much indebted to the power with which Burke stirred the stagnant waters of our literature, and by which, while professedly an enemy of revolutions, he himself established one of the greatest, most beneficial, and most lasting—that, namely, of a new, more impassioned, and less conventional mode of addressing the intellects and hearts of men.

Latterly, another change has threatened to come over us. Some men of genius have imported from abroad mangled and mystic Germanism, which has been for awhile the rage. This has not, however, mingled kindly with the current of our literature. The philosophic language or jargon—and it is partly both—of the Teutons has not been well assimilated or thoroughly digested among us. From its frequent and affected use, it is fast becoming a nuisance. While thinkers have gladly availed themselves of all that is really valuable in its terminology, pretenders have still more eagerly sought shelter for their conceit or morbid weakness under its shield. The stuff, the verbiage, the mystic bewilderment, the affectation, the disguised commonplace, which every periodical almost now teems with, under the form of this foreign phraseology, are enormous, and would require a Swift, in a new "Tale of a Tub," or "Battle of the Books," to expose them. We fancy, however, we see a re-action coming. Great is the Anglo-Saxon, the language of Shakspere and Byron, and it shall yet prevail over the feeble refinements of the small mimics of the Teutonic giants. Germany was long Britain's humble echo and translator. Britain, please God! shall never become *its* shadow. Our thought, too, and faith, which have suffered from the same cause, are in due time to recover; nay, the process of restoration is begun. And among other remedies for the evil, while yet it in a great measure continues, we strongly recommend a recurrence to the works of our great classics in the past; and, among their bright list, let not *him* be forgotten, who, apart from his genius, his worth, and his political achievements, has in his works presented so many titles to be considered not only as the *facile princeps* among the writers of his own time (although this itself were high distinction), but as one of the first authors who, in any age or country, ever speculated or wrote.

WILLIAM HAZLITT.

We may begin by stating, that our principal qualification for writing about Hazlitt is, that we have learned to love him, in spite of himself. This is no ordinary attainment. There is, at first sight, much that is repulsive about his works. There is a fierceness and intellectual intolerance about him by no means attractive. He dashes paradoxes like putting-stones in your face. He now impales a literary reputation upon an antithesis, and now sends a political character limping away, with the point of a prose epigram sticking in its side. How he did fall foul of Rogers, for instance, in a description which must live in the annals of contemptuous criticism—it was so excessively like. It was a painting to the life of the weaknesses of that elegant, but finical poet. Moore, too, he has embalmed—not Moore of "The Twopenny Postbag," and "The Fudge Family," the most witty and subtle of satirists—but Moore of "The Loves of Angels," and "The Veiled Prophet;" the same, but oh, how different!—the elegant ephemeral—the Bard of the Butterflies. How he discusses Crabbe, "describing the house of a poor man like one sent there to distrain for rent!" "giving us the petrifaction of a sigh, and carving a tear to the life in marble!" There was much injustice in all these attacks—all of them, at any rate, were provoking; but no matter; you remembered them; they stung and piqued you, though you could hardly at first love the savage hand which perpetrated such things. Yet we liked Hazlitt even in this wild work. He was honest in it. And there was a feeling of pity mingled with your admiration. You pitied power perversely and wantonly directed against popular idols, and doomed thus everlastingly to prevent its own popularity. He could denounce Moore for "changing the Harp of Erin into a musical snuff-box, and letting her tears of blood evaporate in lip-deep melodies;" t Moore, meanwhile, was singing them drawing-rooms, where poor Hazlitt was not admitted. He could describe Moore barking at kings like a "pug-dog from the carriage of a lady of quality;" but Moore had his revenge in ridiculing a dear friend of Hazlitt's—Hunt, namely—by a wicked little poem concerning a lion and a puppy dog. Hazlitt's criticisms might be immortal, but they did not sell. "Cash, Corn, Currency, and Catholics," did. When you recollected this, you forgave the critic. The quantity of spleen in Hazlitt's mind was indeed immense. How it breaks out perpetually upon his page, in sudden, fierce, and fantastic gushes! How it burns in his declamations, darts athwart the pure light of his genius, embitters his wit into satire, tinges his eloquence with frenzy, and sprinkles his enthusiastic criticisms on poetry and painting with bitter jaundiced personalities! The effect of this upon his reputation has been pernicious. He has taught men to imagine him a misanthrope, a modern Timon, with more bile than brains; a soured malignant cynic, who carried party and personal vindictiveness to the verge of madness. This, must we prove? is but a segment of Hazlitt's character. He was a man, not a gall-bladder, though that needful organ was largely developed in his system. And he had deep wrongs to account for his savage ire. Far are we from proposing him as a faultless or exemplary character. But will his enemies now deny that he was, for whatever reasons, made the mark of relentless and ramified persecution; and that his literary and moral sins were more than expiated by those torrents of incessant abuse which descended on his head, till his name became identical with all that was absurd in Cockneyism, and infamous in London life? Why a man of keen warm temperament, with passions equal to his powers, and with a deep soul-rooted sense of his superiority to some, at least, of his assailants, should be exasperated by such treatment, we can understand well, upon the principle of the stag turning on his hunters, and

finding in those horns, which were meant only for ornament, means of defence and retaliation. Why, while others of his party were treated with comparative gentleness, he was so specially victimised—why, while Jeffrey, for instance, was only tipped lightly with the lash, he was stripped naked and scourged to ribands—he himself never could understand, and it is yet a mystery to many. The explanation, perhaps, lies in the history of those unhappy times, when the foul hoof of the demon of politics was still allowed to pollute the stream of literature, and poison Castalia itself.

In the light of a better era, we approach the consideration of the character and genius of Hazlitt, as a great erring man, but one of whom it may truly be said, that he was more sinned against than sinning. And his first characteristic is that of absolute earnestness. In this respect, he has few equals. Verily it is the rarest of qualities. Shreds of sincerity are common enough. Bits of truth come out every now and then from the most artificial of the mock-earnest. Those men are wrong, who think Byron always affected in his proclamations of personal misery. Often he is so palpably; but, at other times, the words bespeak their own truthfulness. They are the mere wringings of the heart. Who can doubt that his brow, the index of his soul, darkened, as he wrote that fearful curse, the burden of which is forgiveness? or that he wept when he penned the last stanzas of the Second Canto of "Childe Harold," "thou, too, art gone, thou loved and lovely one!" But, as a whole, his works are, as confessions, overcharged. No one, indeed, should write confessions in rhyme. There is too strong a temptation, while employing the melody, to use the language of fiction. Not that Byron's letters are more faithful to his emotions than some of his poetry: they reflect the man in all his moods; but the "Dream" showed him in his reverie, in his trance of passion, and depth of inspiration. And that man, sitting alone, and with the warm tears falling upon the blurred and blotted pages—that man was Byron. But while *he* frequently counterfeited Hazlitt is always in earnest. Writing in prose, he had never to sacrifice a sentiment to a sound. His works are therefore a mirror of the heart. And we pardon their egotism, their spleen, their very rancour, for the sake of that eloquence of earnestness in which their every sentence is steeped. In this respect, as well as in agreeable gossip, he reminds us of Montaigne, the fine old Gascon egotist, who possessed, however, a happier disposition, and whose lines fell in pleasanter places than the author of "Table Talk."

Hazlitt's ruling faculty was unquestionably a discriminating intellect. His *forte* lay in fastening, by sure, swift instinct, upon the differential quality of the author, book, or picture, which was the topic of his criticism. And, in saying this, we intend to intimate our belief that he does not belong to the very highest order of minds, in whom imagination, or, more properly, creative intellect, is ever the presiding power. Here we are aware of going in opposition to Foster, who, in his critical estimate of Robert Hall, asserts that, "except in the opinion of very young people, and second-rate poets, intellect is the first faculty in every great mind." At the risk of being included in one or other of the two classes thus contemptuously discriminated, we venture to contradict the critic. We ask, what are the very highest minds, by universal admission, which have yet appeared among men? Are they not those of Homer, Plato, Dante, Shakspere, Milton, Spenser; perhaps we should add, Sir Walter Scott, Goethe, Newton, and Lord Bacon? Now, with the exception of the two last mentioned, can any one doubt that imagination, though far from being the sole, was the presiding power in all those majestic minds. Was it not this faculty which animated that old bard who, on the Chian strand,

> "Beheld the Iliad and the Odyssee
> Rise to the swelling of the voiceful sea?"

Was it not imagination which prompted the golden fantasies and eloquence of Plato? Was it not the same power, in

a darker and more demoniac shape, which took down the mighty Florentine through the descending circles of damnation, and up the bright steps of celestial blessedness? Did not imagination bind in, like glorious girdle, all the varied and numberless faculties of Shakspere, the myriad-minded? Did it not show to Milton's inward eye the secrets of eternity? Did it not pour all the "Arabian heaven" upon the nights and days of Spenser, whose pen was a limb of the rainbow? Did it not people the blank of the past with crowding forms and faces, to the exhaustless mind and on the many-coloured page of Scott? Did not its magic robe bear Goethe harmless, as he entered with Faust and Mephistopheles amid the hurry and horror of the Walpurgis night? Nay, even in reference to Newton and Bacon, we can hardly persuade ourselves that, in both their minds, it was not the ruling, as we know in the latter it was a principal, faculty; that it did not attend the one in the giant leaps of his geometry, as well as assist the other in making out his map of all the provinces of science, and of all the capabilities of mind. In somewhat lower, but still lofty regions, we find the same faculty presiding over the rest:—as in Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Byron, and Burke. In those writers who had the benefit of inspiration, it is the same. Think of Isaiah, with his glowing eloquence; Ezekiel, with his stupendous visions, tinged by the "terrible crystal;" the author of Job, with his gorgeous imagery; Daniel, with his allegory; David, with his lyric enthusiasm; and the author of the Apocalypse, where the events of time and the cycles of eternity are blended in one tremendous tragedy, and enacted on one obscure and visionary stage.

Imagination thus seems, in its higher form, to be the sovereign faculty of the loftiest natures; not perhaps of critics and logicians, but certainly of philosophers and poets. Perhaps, after all, Foster, in underrating imagination, is only committing the common error of confounding it with fancy—confounding the faculty which supplies foliage with that finer power which produces fruit—the faculty which is a mere fountain of images and illustrations with that which is the parent of thought. Imagination, in our sense of the term, is at once illustrative and creative. It sees by intuition, it illustrates by metaphor, it speaks in music. All great thought links itself instantaneously to imagery, and comes forth, like Minerva, in a panoply of glittering armour. All great thought is, in a word, poetical, and creates a rhythm of its own. With this explanation, we hold imagination to be the most godlike of human powers; and being neither *very* young persons, nor yet guilty of the sin of verse, we can afford to retain our opinion in defiance of the anathema of the late admired and eloquent essayist.

The subject of the present sketch was far from destitute of this faculty. He had more of it than he himself would believe. But though we have heard him charged, by those who knew nothing about him, with a superabundance of this very quality, his great strength lay neither in imagination, nor—to take the word in the philosophical sense—in reason, but in acute and discriminating understanding. Unable to reach the aerial heights of poetry—to grapple with the greater passions of the human soul—or to catch, on immortal canvas, either the features of the human face, the lineaments of nature, or the eloquent passages of history—he has become, nevertheless, through his blended discrimination and enthusiasm, one of our best critics on poetry; and, his enemies themselves being judges, a first-rate, if not unrivalled, connoisseur of painting. Add to this, his knowledge of human nature—his deep dissections of life, in all its varieties—his ingenious but imperfect metaphysical aspirations—his memorable points, jutting out in vigorous projection from every page—the boldness of his paradoxes—the allusions to his past history, which, like flowers on "murk and haggard rocks," flash on you where you expect them not—his imagery, chiefly culled from his own experience, or from the pages of the early English dramatists—his delicious gossip—his pas-

sionate panegyrics, bursting out so obviously from the heart—his criticisms upon the drama, the fancy, and every department of the fine arts—his frequent and vigorous irruptions into more abstruse regions of thought, such as the principles of human action, the Malthusian theory, legislation, pulpit eloquence, and criminal law; and his style, with its point, its terseness, its brilliance, its resistless charm of playful ease, alternating with fierce earnestness, and its rich profusion of poetical quotation—take all this together, and we have a view of the sunny side of his literary character. His faults are—an occasional ambition to shine—to sparkle—to dazzle—a fondness for paradox, pushed to a passion—a lack of simplicity in his more elaborate, and of dignity in his more conversational, passages—a delight in sudden breaks, marks of admiration, and other convulsive spasms, which we hate, even in the ablest writers—a display of strong prejudices, too plainly interfering with the dictates of his better judgment—a taste keen and sensitive, but capricious—a habit of quoting favourite authors, carried so far as to interfere with the unity, freedom, and force of his own style—occasional bursts of sheer fustian, like the bright sores of leprosy—frequent, though petty, pilferings from other authors; and, akin to this, a sad trick of stealing from himself, by perpetually repeating the same quotation, the same image, the same thought, or even the same long and laboured passage. Many of these faults arise from his circumstances, as a victim of proscription and a writer for bread. And his excellences are more than enough to counterbalance them, and form the tombstone of their oblivion.

William Hazlitt was the son of a dissenting minister in Wem, Shropshire. There he spent his speculative, aspiring, but uneasy youth; balancing between hope and despondency—the dread of divinity as a study, and the love of painting—obedience to his father, and the gratification of his own tastes. There, too, as the first era of his mental life, he met with Coleridge, whom he walked ten miles in the mud to hear preach; and who, by that sermon—a sermon, he tells us, on peace and war, on church and state, descriptive of those who "inscribed the cross of Christ on banners dripping with human gore"—startled and aroused the young spirit of Hazlitt as from deep slumber; an effect which the conversation of the gifted man, who came the next day to see the father, and predicted the future eminence of the son, greatly deepened and confirmed. What followed thereafter—Coleridge's wonderful and flowing talk—his appearance, with "long dark locks floating down his forehead—eyebrows light as if built of ivory, with eyes rolling beneath them like a sea with darkened lustre—nose small, insufficient, nothing—mouth open, eloquent, gross, voluptuous"—old Hazlitt's admiration expressed in silence, the son's in struggling sentences—his walk with the poet as he departed, in view of the Welsh mountains, which skirted the prospect with their tempestuous confusion, and had heard no such mystic sounds since "Highborn Hoel's harp, and soft Llewellyn's lay"—his promised visit to Coleridge in spring—his return from his convoy, "pensive, but much pleased"—his metaphysical and poetical studies in the interval—his labouring in vain to express his recondite and evanescent thoughts on paper—his shedding tears on the unfinished manuscript—the coming of that much desired spring—his departure—his reading "Paul and Virginia," for the first time, in an inn by the way—his reception by the "noticeable man with large grey eyes," as eloquent, and to him as kind as ever—his journey with him along the shores of the Bristol Channel, sounding on his way as he went—their entering a little solitary ale-house, where Coleridge took up a well-thumbed copy of Thomson's "Seasons," and uttered the memorable words, "This is true fame"—their meeting with Wordsworth—his homely dress and rugged recitation and manly eloquence; all this, and more, may be found in "My first acquaintance with Poets"—to us the most delightful of all Hazlitt's essays, and which we can hardly read or recall to memory without tears,

striking, as it does, upon chords, and awakening reminiscences in our own breasts, with which no stranger may intermeddle. The after incidents in his life were less pleasing. He went to London, to reside with his brother. „Deterred from the pursuit of painting, by the severity of his own standard, and the elevation of his own ideal, he became a professional author. In this capacity, he had the usual blending of struggle and success. He became known as a critic, first, by contributing to "The Morning Chronicle." He drew up various compilations for the booksellers; among others, a masterly abridgment of "Tucker's Light of Nature," giving the essence of seven volumes in one. He published the result of his youthful studies, in the shape of an "Essay on the Principles of Human Action." He became, at an early period, intimate with Charles Lamb, who thought and called him "one of the wisest and finest spirits breathing;" and clung to him to the last. From his early idols of the Lake school he was gradually estranged; but, though treated by them with coldness and contempt, he never ceased to be the warm admirer of their genius, and the intrepid advocate of their fame.

About the year 1816, he became connected with "The Edinburgh Review," and strenuously did he draw that Ulysses bow, "heroic to all times." We have seen some of his articles quoted as Jeffrey's—which will be thought by many, though not by us, a great compliment to him. About the same time, he delivered several series of lectures at the Surrey Institution. Though he suffered, according to Sergeant Talfourd, from the imperfect sympathies of his audience, his lectures were very effective. His delivery reminded Keats of Kean's. Having occasion to allude to Dr Johnson's carrying the poor victim of disease and dissipation on his back up Fleet Street, his hearers showed their sense and taste by bursting out into a titter, but were subdued into deep silence, when he added, in his sternest and most impressive manner, "an incident which realises the parable of the Good Samaritan." He got keenly entangled, for a time, in the Malthusian controversy, as well as in the fiercer disputes of politics. He was one of the most laborious of writers, and often cleared, by his writings, £600 a-year. His private character was neither better nor worse than was then that of the class to which he belonged. At one period, he had sunk so deeply into habits of intemperance, that, for "four years, he did not know the sensation of sobriety;" but, by a noble effort, he recovered himself, and, for fourteen years before his death, drank nothing stronger than very potent tea. Let charity hope that his other excesses sprung from no originally debased taste, but from the sheer abandonment and desperation of an earnest mind, seeking for truth, but finding none—yearning for, but never reaching any definite belief—"wandering over God's verdant earth like the unblessed over burning deserts, passionately digging wells, but drawing up only the dry quicksand; and at length dying, and making no sign." In spite, however, of all this, and of a frightful exacerbation of temper, which hacked and hewed his countenance, rendered him preternaturally suspicious, and soured him against his kindest and oldest friends—we concede him the possession originally of a noble nature. In conversation, he was impetuous and eager, but wanted fluency. Yet it was fine, they tell us, to see his mind working and struggling out into expression—to see his strong-winged thoughts beating their pinions against the bars of a limited and ragged verbiage!

> "So have I, not unmoved in mind,
> Seen birds of tempest-loving kind,
> Thus beating up against the wind."

He was careless in the extreme of his personal appearance, of his reputation, and of his money. His prejudices were strong, and bitter the breath of his angry speech; yet he could say, as well as do, generous things. Once, on hearing read a splendid passage in praise of Napoleon, from "Blackwood," he burst out, "That's fine, that's noble. I'll forgive the fellows all they've said of me." His face was

pale and earnest, almost to haggardness, yet finely formed; his eager eye, like that of one seeking to see, rather than seeing, into the strange mystery of being around him; his brow elevated, and worthy of Coleridge's encomium, pronounced in reference to his first interview—"For these two hours, though he spoke not, I was conversing with his forehead;" his hair dark and abundant. But we turn from this short summary of his perturbed personal existence to glance at some of his principal works.

His first production, published anonymously, and entitled "An Essay on the Principles of Human Action," sprung, as we have said, from his early and solitary studies. And this probably led its author to speak of it at all times, with parental pride, as his best. Certainly it is a shrewd and ingenious essay; but, without entering into its pretensions, as a defence of the natural benevolence of the human mind, its style—dry, stiff, and rigid—prevented altogether its popularity; but did not blind the sharp and candid eye of Sir James MacIntosh from perceiving its merit, even amid the enervating heat of Hindostan, and testifying it in a way most gratifying to its author's feelings. As it is, not a thousand persons have probably ever seen or heard of it. It rests on the same forgotten shelf with two still more original and powerful metaphysical treatises, Sir William Drummond's "Academical Questions," and John Fearn's "Essay on Consciousness," first written on slips of bark, in the intervals of severe sickness, as the author sailed down the Ganges.

His next considerable work was the "Characters of Shakspere's Plays;" and no one ever had a better right to speak of Shakspere than Hazlitt, for no one ever understood him better, or loved him more warmly. His intention was not to exhaust the profound subject; but simply to supply short introductions to the separate plays, more worthy of Shakspere than the poor prefixes of Dr Johnson. Viewed in this light, they are admirable. They not only embalm, in more choice and eloquent diction, those merits which civilised man allows, but they find out beauties which the watchful admiration of ages had not detected. And honour to him who discovers a new beauty lurking in the crevice of a great mind or work, more than to the discoverer of a new fossil or mineral. Thus had commentators and critics been talking about and about Lear; but, till Charles Lamb, no one noticed that sublime identification of the old man's age with the heavens, in the exclamation—

> "If ye do love old men, if your sweet sway
> Hallow obedience, *if yourselves are old,*
> Make it your cause."

So, if Hazlitt has not stumbled upon any gem quite so precious, on what Voltaire is pleased to call the "enormous dunghill," he has, with throbbing finger, pointed out not a few modest and inestimable pearls. The willows had wept over Ophelia's watery grave for ages, but no one had observed that they were "grey" below, save the "inevitable eye" of Shakspere, and of his congenial critic. And how thoroughly does he sympathise with his hero's boundless catholicity of mind—his power of "shooting his soul" from body to body, and spirit to spirit—of now ejaculating an Ariel, that arrow of the elements—now digging out a Caliban from the raw earth, and now forging a Faulconbridge or a Hotspur—whereby he was, "not one, but all mankind's epitome!" and had he let out from under the arch of his forehead an Æschylus and a Molière, a Sophocles and a Sheridan, a Byron and a Burns, would have missed them not. Shakspere did not appear to Hazlitt, as to Coleridge, "a giant stripling, who had never come to his full height, else he had not been a man but a monster." He seemed a full-grown and thoroughly expanded man, containing in him, moreover, the essence of all men; mirroring on that calm forehead, and in that deep eye of his, the "great globe itself, and all which it inherits." Perhaps he is too eulogistic; and yet can the author of "Lear," "Timon," and "Macbeth," be over-praised? Enthusiasm here is sobriety, exaggeration truth. We prefer the critic who, approaching Shakspere, should feel like a man gazing on Ben Nevis or Mont Blanc, capable only

of silent wonder or bursting praise, having no wish or leisure to mark petty deformities in masses so sublime. Hazlitt, elsewhere so acute and discriminating, is here peculiarly characterised by this spirit. He does not criticise, but wonder; he does not examine, but adore.

The "Round Table" is a volume of essays, not unworthy of the best days of that fine species of composition. In it he descants delightfully, as if from an arm-chair, upon a multitude of topics; such as the "Love of the Country," "John Buncle," "Gusto," "Izaak Walton," &c.; but by no means exhibits either the full force or depth of his intellect. You see him in his night-gown and slippers, in the undress of his mind; and you are pleased to find that a man who can now inveigh as fiercely and eloquently as if he had come from the tomb of Timon, and now reason as acutely as if he had inherited the mantle of Hobbes, should sink down so smoothly into the chair of Addison and Steele; prattle so pleasantly; "babble of green fields;" and merge the stern and stalwart patriot so easily in the good fellow.

"Table Talk" was a continuation of the "Round Table;" and, while hardly less easy and gossiping, is a much more intense and vigorous production. Here, he strikes upon deeper chords, abounds more in pensive reminiscences, rises to finer bursts of eloquence, and reveals more of the strange machinery of his own mind. It is a book full of thought, of character, and of himself. Its faults are personality and egotism. Among its various essays, we prefer those on the "Pleasures of Painting"—a fine theme, and finely handled; on "Going a Journey;" on "Will-Making;" and on that striking peculiarity of his mind which led him to prefer the past to the future. Of all his works, this is the one we would prefer putting into the hands of those who are prejudiced against him. It shows him in the light of a genuine practical philosopher. It is a shield which, to borrow the allusion of Dr Johnson about the shield of Achilles in Homer, he may hold up against all his enemies.

In a similar spirit and style, he has written the "Plain Speaker," "Characteristics" (a little book containing a digest of his entire philosophy, in the form of aphorisms), "Travels Abroad," "Conversations with Northcote," &c. &c. But by these he is less generally known, than by his Lectures delivered at the Surrey Institution. As a lecturer, he proved more popular than was expected by those who knew his uncompromising scorn of all those tricks and petty artifices which are frequently employed to pump up applause. His manner was somewhat abrupt and monotonous, but earnest and energetic. Lecturing has since become fashionable among men of genius; though we doubt greatly if it tend either to their permanent credit or to the good of the public. It either seduces them into claptrap, or presents them, unstudied in the art of oratory, in unfavourable and deteriorating lights; and, generally speaking, instead of instructing, it misleads and mystifies the public. The man stands up before his audience, "half a prophet and half a play-actor," in a position intensely and almost ludicrously false. How utter "Burdens" to such a promiscuous audience as assembles to while away an evening hour in a lecture-room! Conceive of an ancient prophet, delivered of one of his oracles through the established formula of "Ladies and gentlemen!" No; the lecture and the lecture-room are better fitted for the glib, clever, showy declaimer, who happens to have white hands and cultivated whiskers, than for the simple and strongly-inspired sons of genius.

The "Surrey Lectures," when printed, were much abused and much read. They abound in fine and startling things, in eloquent dogmatism, in the impertinence of conscious power, in rude electric shocks to popular prejudice, in passages of sounding declamation. "The savage," he says, "is a poet, when he paints his idol with blood; the countryman, when he stops to look at the rainbow." Perhaps the best of his three series is that on the "Elizabethan Period." It is not easy to see the stars at noonday; but Lamb and Hazlitt possess a telescope which enables them

to descry, through the burning blaze of Shakspere, his eclipsed but brilliant contemporaries—Marston the witty; Marlowe, with his mighty line, "his lust of power," "his hunger and thirst after *unrighteousness*," his passionate pictures of maidens, "shadowing more beauty in their airy brows than have the white breasts of the Queen of Love," and one of whom "Apollo courted for her hair, and *offered as a dower his burning throne*;" Ben Jonson, the learned and saturnine, with that slow, deep sneer sculptured upon his lip; Webster, prince of the quaking border which divides the region of the terrible from that of the horrific; Fletcher, the picturesque and romantic; the severe and masculine Massinger. But neither Lamb nor Hazlitt have brought out sufficiently the "gentle Willy's" superiority to these, not merely in intellectual qualities, but in the purity of his moral tone. Nothing about Shakspere astonishes us so much as this. Some, indeed, there are, we have seen, who still prate of Shakspere's immorality; of his "being at home in Falstaff," of the "gross obscenities" in which his genius indulges. We bid the talkers of this pitiful nonsense to compare Shakspere not only with his dramatic co-evals — with the brutalities of Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger; not only with the dramatists of Charles II.'s era, but with the preachers, theologians, and philosophers of his own day—to see how vastly clearer, purer, and healthier, is the stream of his morality; how comparatively few in him the passages which shock propriety; and how distinct is the large moral of his principal plays — of "Othello," "Lear," and "Macbeth," nay, of "Timon," "Measure for Measure," and the "Winter's Tale." In the close of this series, Lord Bacon, with his wisdom, rich and mellow, as if it had been accumulating throughout antenatal ages; Jeremy Taylor, the sweet, the quaint, the genial, prodigal of beauty and splendour as nature herself, with that waving and wondrous style of his, "untwisting all the chords which tie the hidden soul of harmony," and who, in his youth, by his "sublime and raised discourses, and his young and florid beauty, made men take him for an angel newly descended from the climes of glory;" and Sir Thomas Browne, that Plato with a twist in his brains, oddest of humorists, most delicious of egotists, most charitable of men; translating the universe into one of its quaintest versions; forcing, in the fantastic devices of the "Urn Burial," a grim smile from the jaws of the grave itself; feeding his *whim* with every variety of learning and the rarest treasures of wisdom, till it grows gigantic and immeasurable; going to bed to the tune of "the huntsmen are up in Arabia, and they have already passed their first sleep in Persia;" and expressing his strange thoughts in a dress of language so grotesque, yet so gorgeous, that you cry out, with the fool in Shakspere, "Motley's the only wear," and fall positively in love with the mother tongue of the "Chimeras;"—to this illustrious triumvirate Hazlitt has done justice, "heaped up, pressed down, shaken together, and running over." Whenever he has occasion to speak of a cluster of genius, he rises above himself, and his words carol and curvet "like proud seas under him." And how eloquent and melting he becomes, when he couples the reading of a favourite work with some incident of his past history, when he illumines their pages with the pale moonbeam of memory, recording the inn where he first read "Paul and Virginia;" the era made in his existence by Schiller's "Robbers," which "staggered him like a blow;" the delight with which he saw, in Goethe's page, "the enthusiast (Werter) coming up from the valley," and the "long grass waving over his sepulchre;" his first reading of Burke, of "Caleb Williams," and the "Man of Feeling." We like nothing better about Hazlitt than his reverting to the past. Sick of the noisy or nauseous now, he is for ever recurring to the glorious "has been." To him the past is more real, as well as dearer, than the future. The one is a cold blank, the other, a warm and thickly-inscribed page. He broods incessantly upon the passages of his perished history, his early loves, hopes, fears, his raptures, and, even still dearer in the con-

secrating ray of recollection, his miseries and chagrins, and cries out for the revolution of the great Platonic year to bring them round again. Indeed, his love to his past self—his *present* he heartily hates and despises—is a kind of insanity.

The "Spirit of the Age" was, in many respects, the best of Hazlitt's productions. It was the "Harvest Home" of his mind. He collected into it the gathered essence of his *critical* thought. It contains his mature and deliberate opinion of many of his contemporaries, expressed in language "gorgeous as the sun at midsummer." In reading it, you feel as when passing through a gallery of pictures. Here you see Jeremy Bentham, with quiet rapt eye, "meditating the coming age, and regarding the people around him no more than the flies of a summer day." There, in deeper meditation far, and his eye lost in a far larger vista, with misty uncertain look, and voice as the "echo of the roar of the congregated thought of ages," sits the wizard Coleridge. Yonder is Elia, "ever turning pensive to the past." Wordsworth — Wordsworth of 1798—with fustian jacket, a "severe worn pressure of thought about the temples, and a fire in his eye, as if he saw something more in objects than other men," stalks moodily along, or stops, startled into boyish delight by the sight of a round, warm nest, in its inimitable completeness, its snug security, and with that calm look of mild confidence which it sends up, as from an eye, to the encompassing heaven; or hears the rustle of a brown passing leaf, "as though a god rushed by." Southey passes with erect look, and "umbrella in his hand in the finest weather." Irving launches his thunderbolts. Rogers polishes his pebbles. Moore minces his pretty sentimentalisms, or transfixes titled fools on his "diamond brooch." Gifford "strikes at the crutches of Mary Robinson." Eldon yawns out his slow syllables of decision. Chalmers "mouths an idea as a dog mouths a bone." Brougham utters his "high unmitigated voice, approaching to a scream." Jeffrey creams, and bubbles, and sparkles, like his own champagne. Campbell plies his file, and Sheridan Knowles his fishing-rod, on this true painter's pictured page. Many disquisitions, too, are interspersed on important topics, which met him in his way. For instance, in the course of a few pages, he exhausts the Malthusian controversy. The book, in fine, would not be Hazlitt's, if it were not full of errors of judgment, exaggerations of statement, acerbities of temper, and *splendida vitia* of style.

Of "The Liberal," Hazlitt was the home-editor. No one can have forgotten the history of this unfortunate periodical. It was meant for a bombshell, to be cast —and by such spirits! Byron, Shelley, Hazlitt, and Hunt—among the inflammeable materials of England; but went off prematurely, and scorched and blistered only their own hands. Byron's proud stomach sickened of it. Poor Shelley was drowned. Hunt became dyspeptic and dull. And to Hazlitt, already a broad mark for the arrows of political and literary attack, was left the double and difficult task of bearing the brunt of its odium, and fulfilling the prestige of its fame. In fact, with the exception of the "Vision of Judgment," and the fragments by Shelley from "Faust," his essays are the only readable things in it; and whether we admire their sentiment or not, we are forced to admit their bold earnestness, and feel their burning vigour.

As a critic on painting, his pretensions are high. Paintings were to him real existences; each figure in his favourite pieces he loved as well as though he had known it from infancy. With no single passage equal to one or two we could produce from Fuseli—destitute of that uniform manliness of taste and style which distinguished Allan Cunningham—without Lamb's subtlety, or Coleridge's grand general view of the design and *morale* of paintings—he has more enthusiasm, sympathies more unaffected and profound with the masters and masterpieces of the art, more discrimination and a finer tact in discerning latent beauties. Few have said such eloquent extravagances about the old masters, and yet none have more accurately analysed and painted their

solid merits. The heavy dark of Rembrandt weighing down his pictures under the pressure of *chiaro scuro*, Claude's vivid skies, Titian's lovely landscapes, are dearer to him than even the cartoons of Raphael, or the frescoes of Angelo. The silent splendours of that beautiful art lift him ever above himself, and touch his lips with living fire! He is the prose-poet of painting. His "Life of Napoleon" was the last and the largest of his books. It had loomed before his view for years, and he meant it for a proud and monumental work. He loved Napoleon, as he loved all the other members of his intellectual seraglio, with idolatrous admiration. He saw him, enlarged in the haze of the hatred with which he regarded the despotisms which he overthrew—the Messiah of Democracy, the pale, yet bold pilot of that fire-ship which the French Revolution had launched amid its ocean of blood, to track through the nations its path of dismay, ruin, and death! But the book, written in the decay of his mind, full of hasty and huddled narrative, breathing more the spirit of the partisan than that of the calm and dignified historian, is confessedly a failure, though redeemed by passages of paradoxical acuteness and passionate declamation, which yet display rather the convulsion of strong disease, than the sovereign energy of health; more the last throes and staggerings of a ruined mind, than the sublime composure of a spirit about to be "made perfect." One description in it, of the Reign of Terror—a subject suited to the dark and permanent exasperation of his mind—is more like a fragment of Tacitus than anything we remember in modern history. There is in it the same gloomy concentration and massive grandeur. He paints the scene as with the torch of the Furies: one or two fierce waftures, and the thing is done. And although the work be imperfect and morbid, yet we believe that the memory of it ministered some consolation to poor Hazlitt on his premature and unhappy death-bed. On whatever misconduct and mishaps he might look back, with whatever "dimness of anguish" he may have contemplated the gloomy Future, he had, in language however rude and ragged, expressed his full idea of the idol of his soul, and so far was content.

"Poor fellow, he had many things to wound him:
Let's own, since it can do no good on earth;
It was a trying moment, that which found him
Standing alone beside his desolate hearth,
While all his household gods lay shiver'd round him."

Well says Bulwer somewhere, that of all the mental wrecks which have occurred in our era, this was the most melancholy. Others may have been as unhappy in their domestic circumstances, and gone down deeper places of dissipation than he; but they had meanwhile the breath of popularity, if not of wealth and station, to give them a certain solace. It was so with Burns and Byron. But Hazlitt had absolutely nothing to support and cheer him. With no hope, no fortune, no status in society, no certain popularity as a writer, no domestic peace, little sympathy from kindred spirits, little support from his political party, no moral management, no definite belief; with great powers and great passions within, and with a host of powerful enemies without, it was his to enact one of the saddest tragedies which earth ever witnessed.

Such is a faithful portraiture of an extraordinary man, whose restless intellect and stormy passions have now, for eighteen years, found that repose in the grave which was denied them above it. Let his enemies and friends divide between them twain this lesson, expressed in the language of another hapless son of genius, "that prudent, cautious self-control is wisdom's root." But both will readily concede now, that a subtle thinker, an eloquent writer, a lover of beauty, and poetry, and man, and truth, one of the best of critics, and not the worst of men, expired in William Hazlitt.

CHARLES LAMB.

It is a singular circumstance, in the present day, that the commercial and the literary character have, in certain instances, been blended, without destroying each other. Literature, in our strange era, has entered the counting-room. Wit, of the rarest grain, has assisted in unpacking bales of goods. Genius, of a high order, has seated itself upon the tall three-legged stool, and worn a quill, instead of laurel, behind its "trembling ears." The genius, thus enthroned, has not, to be sure, been of the most romantic or ethereal kind. The idea is ridiculous, of a clerk, now with fire and fury inditing a Mystery, and now taking in a consignment of muslin;—dropping the pen, which had been dashing down the terrible syllables of a Walpurgis night, to make out an invoice of yarns. With all reverence for trade, in its various departments, we cannot believe it possible for a Goethe or a Schiller, a Byron or a Shelley, a Coleridge or a Wilson, to have been bred in a warehouse. Had they not been "wild and woodland rovers," known, through broad lands, to "every star and every wind that blows," with foot free to tread, as it listed, the deck or the heather, the soft sod or the incrusted lava, the sand or the snow, and with faces embrowned by the sunbeams which had smote them by day, and spiritualised by the starry eyes which had shot down influence upon them by night—they could not have been what, to the honour of their species and the glory of the universe, they have become. Only conceive Goethe, with that lofty forehead and stately form, bending over a ledger; or the wizard Coleridge, with those dreamy eyes, deep in calculation of the price of stocks. And yet Charles Lamb, Coleridge's dear friend, thus spent the greater portion of his life. But then Charles Lamb, though as true a genius as any of those we have named, was a genius of quite a different and inferior order. And we know not how much greater he might have become, had he received a diverse training, and instead of being the slave of a counting-room, had been free of that city, the builder and maker of which is God. Meanwhile let us be thankful for him as he was. If not a passionate, and earnest, and high-toned poet, he was a gay and chirruping rhymster—the quaintest of humorists—the most delicate and refined of critics—the most delightful of essayists—the most genial of companions. We have a theory—nor do we hold it alone—that heart and soul are always found together; that a man sees as he loves, and loves as he sees; that the distinction between cherubim, knowing ones, and seraphim, burning ones, must be spurned away, as we mount up along the ladder of being to the throne of Him, all whose perfections meet in that one transcendent love, which is his essence and his all. The heart has an eye of its own, and its vision is clear, far, and true. In Charles Lamb, at least, the two qualities were one. He reasoned with his heart—with his heart he loved, with his heart he laughed, in heart he lived, moved, and had his being. And what a strange, wild, hot, large heart Lamb's was! It was only less than that which lies in Dumfries kirkyard, belonging to the man of whom it was said, that, if you touched his hand, it would have burned yours. And, as this heart taught him to love the outcasts of society, to associate with its excommunicates, to cry halves to every pelt of calumny which assailed their devoted heads, so it led him, in search of matter for his genius, into the oddest and most out-of-the-way corners. From the beaten track of authorship, he turned aside into a narrow zig-zag footpath, where he has, hitherto, had no follower. He shunned aerial heights of speculation and vertigo raptures of passion; he cut no Gordian knots; he winked hard at all abstruse questions; he babbled not about green fields; he detested politics; he had small sympathies with the spirit and literature of his age; but he sat still in his study, with Ben Jonson and Webster, or he puffed out poetry from his insepa-

Hunt's thoughtful, yet joyous visage—as if we had heard the colloquies which hung wings of gold upon each dark hour, as it chased the other way. For the dead, we may not, and need not pray; but surely, as we wave farewell, we may say—Blessings on thy kind heart, oblivion to thy errors, immortality to thy name.

WILLIAM COBBETT.

William Cobbett we may, without fear of contradiction, call the father of cheap literature. His self-styled "Twopenny Trash" was the strong seed whence a progeny has sprung, manifold and thick as the "leaves of Vallambrosa;" and a portion of whatever honour or shame attaches to our present cheap publications must redound to his credit or to his disgrace. And although he was by no means a timid or a squeamish man, we are certain that, could he now raise his head from the dust, it were to look with withering scorn and pity, not unmingled with remorse, upon those myriads of low and loathsome publications at present pouring from the English press—making up for their minuteness by their mischief, for their want of point by their profanity, for their stupidity by their licentiousness—absolutely monopolising millions of readers, and reminding us of that plague of frogs which swept Egypt, "till the land stank, so numerous was the fry."

William Cobbett has been often ably, but never, we think, fully or satisfactorily, criticised. We do not refer merely to his political creed and character. These topics we propose to avoid, permitting ourselves, however, the general remark, that he was just as able and just as consistent a politician as some of his most formidable opponents (such as Burdett and Brougham) have *since* proved themselves to be. Of his literary merits, we remember only three striking pictures, all of which, however, slide into his political aspects. The first is that very eloquent, though somewhat sketchy and one-sided character by Robert Hall, ending with the words—"a firebrand, not a luminary—the Polyphemus of the mob—the one-eyed monarch of the blind." Hall, we imagine, however, was too different a man from Cobbett to appreciate him entirely—too attentive to the construction of his sentences to relish Cobbett's easy rambling style—too fastidious in his taste to bear with Cobbett's blunt picturesque expressions—too fond of the elegant abstractions of thought to sympathise with Cobbett's passion for, and power over, facts; still he must have often admired his vigorous dissections of character, and often chuckled, and even roared, over his rough native humour. Another attempt to contain Cobbett in a crown-piece was made by Lockhart, in what, we think, was the last "Noctes" he contributed to "Blackwood," appearing somewhere about the close of the year 1832. It is put into the mouth of Jeffrey, and is very smart, snappish, and pointed, but is not peculiarly characteristic. It is rather an inventory than a picture, and such an inventory of this modern "man Mountain" as the Lilliputians made of Gulliver when they emptied his *pockets*. It is not such a masterly full-length as Lockhart could have executed, and as he has executed of a kindred spirit, John Clerk. The third and best character is by Hazlitt, in his "Table-Talk," and is written with all his wonted discrimination. We remember that he calls him a "very honest man, with a total want of principle," speaks of his "Register" as a "perpetual prospectus," and draws a striking parallel between him and Paine. Our object is somewhat more minutely and in detail to bring this brawniest of men before our readers.

And, first, of his personal appearance. That was, as generally happens, a thorough, though not an ostentatious, index to his character. Those who expected to find in Cobbett a rude, truculent barba-

rian were, as they deserved to be, disappointed. They found, instead, a tall, stout, mild-faced, broad-shouldered, farmer-looking man, with a spice of humour lurking in his eye, but without one vestige of fierceness or malignity either in his look or demeanour. His private manners were simple, unaffected—almost gentlemanly. His mode of addressing an audience was quiet, clear, distinct, and conversational; and the fury and the fervour of the demagogue alike were wanting. The most sarcastic and provoking things oozed out at his lips like milk or honey. Add to this, perfect self-possession, his usual vein of humour somewhat subdued into keeping with his audience, and a certain cajolery in his manner, as the most notable features in his mode of public address. We heard him repeatedly in Edinburgh, during his visit in 1832. He came to the Modern Athens with as much fear and trembling as could befall a man of his sturdy temperament. He expected, he said, ere he arrived, that the Edinburgh people would "throw him into a ditch," but went away highly gratified with his reception. The truth is, they welcomed him as a curiosity, and went to see and hear him as a rarée show. They showed no genuine appreciation of his talents; and, if they did not lift from the ground and pelt him with the common calumnies, it was because they thought it not worth while. He came, tickled their midriffs—they laughed, applauded, and forgot him as soon as his back was turned.

It is dangerous to seek to include a whole character in a single epithet, otherwise we might call William Cobbett "the genius of common sense." Common sense, possessed in an uncommon degree, and backed by powerful passion, often verges, in its effects and in its nature, on genius. Like genius, it works by intuition; it does not creep, nor walk, but leaps to its conclusion. It is to genius an inferior system of shorthand—as swift, but not so beautiful; or it may be called genius applied to meaner subjects, and guided by impulses as free but less lofty. Such a homespun but masculine spirit had pervaded the soul of Swift, and came directly from him to Cobbett.

If ever man deserved, in a subordinate acceptation, the name of "seer," it was the author of the "Register." He did not ratiocinate or inquire; he saw, and saw at the first opening of his sagacious eye. Sometimes his sight was true, and sometimes false—sometimes healthy, and sometimes jaundiced—but it was always sight, and not report; and as well argue with the testimony of the eye as dispute with him his convictions. This was at once his power and his weakness; it accounted for his true and strong perception of public characters, and of the tendency and issues of public events; it accounted for his dogmatism, his inconsistency, and his caprice. It was this strong personal sight which made Cobbett maintain his ground against his many far more accomplished and learned rivals. While they were reading, reflecting, deflecting, and circumspecting, he was looking straight forward and right down into the very heart and marrow of his theme. Whilst they were wasting time in trying on pairs of spectacles belonging to others, he was using his own piercing pair of eyes. Thus, though taken at tremendous odds, the old serjeant seldom failed of a complete triumph. We own it pleases us—it stirs our blood—to think that there has been, even in our time, native vigour enough, in a half-taught man of native power, to neutralise the most accomplished, to level the most learned, to "turn wise men backward and make diviners mad," to startle an age anxious to hide its weakness under the variety of its studies and the multiplicity of its accomplishments, by the tidings that there is yet something better than education—that an "ounce of mother wit" retains its original value—that genius still claims its ancient privileges—and that the breed of intellectual Spartaci and Toussaints is not extinct, amid all the cultivated fribbles and martinets of the day.

Cobbett, if he wanted learning, possessed what was far more valuable—he possessed experience. How few writers have it! Voltaire speaks of some as-

tonishingly wise young hero who seemed born with experience; but, as Campbell remarks, "how few of our heads come into the world with this valuable article!" Most authors, indeed, go through a certain routine, which is dignified with this name. They pass through school and college; write their first sonnet or epigram; fall in love—are received or rejected; publish their first volume—it is puffed or abused, according to the state of the critic's temper or stomach; fall into a sulk or a syncope—gradually cool and calm as they rise or fall to their proper level; and this is called experience. Abused, outraged term! Has an author of almost Miltonic gift run the gauntlet of abusive or detracting criticism for many long years, and yet retained his integrity, his magnanimity, the calm purpose of his soul? Then let him speak of experience, for assuredly experience has spoken to him. And did one, who could, from native talent, have led armies, cabinets, his country, spend years as a private soldier, visit various lands, and undergo many privations and hardships? What a different course of experience this—and it was Cobbett's—from the flea-bites of so-called criticism, or the nightmare of an unsold edition!

Our strong, burly serjeant carried his eye with him into the ranks, in all his travels—in the choice of a wife. Wherever he went, he "saw and conquered"—(what need, after all, of this last word? To see, in the true sense, is always, in the true sense, to conquer. The want of sight is the same thing with the want of success; and thus Cæsar, in his celebrated bulletin, "Veni, vidi, vici," was, for the first and last time, a tautologist)—and home he came, a giant furnished and trained, by an irregular but gigantic education, for becoming a "fourth estate" in the political and literary world.

One quality strikingly manifest in Cobbett, and which had been nurtured by his training, is health. He was essentially a healthy man. He did not, it is true, want his peevish and peculiar humours, but the general tone of his mind as well as body was sound and clear. He signally exemplified the words, "Sana mens in sano corpore." Morbidity was a word he did not recognise as English. Mawkish sentimentalism, in all its shapes, he abhorred; and cant found in him an inexorable foe. Hence we account for his celebrated criticisms on Shakspere and Milton. In his heart, perhaps, he appreciated both, but was indignant at the false and wholly conventional admiration paid them by the multitude. Or, even granting that his taste was bad, and that, from native inaptitude, he could not feel the more delicate and spiritual beauties of either poet, was he not better to avow it openly, than to wear a "foolish face of praise," and pretend to what he had not? In his nonsense of abuse there is something infinitely more racy and refreshing than in others' nonsense of commendation. We prefer him making a football of the "Paradise Lost," and kicking at it with all his might—impotently, indeed, and to the damage of nothing but his own toes—than to see it shining in illustrated editions in the libraries of those whose simpering imbecilities of affected enthusiasm convince you that they have neither understood nor really read it. Much as we admire Shakspere and Milton, we are not disposed to sacrifice Cobbett as a whole burnt-offering at their shrine.

In keeping with this quality of health was that of good-humour. He was the best-natured of political writers. Even when abusing his opponents, there was a kindly twinkle in his eye, and you never were sure that he heartily hated them. His high animal spirits, his fine constitution, and his undisturbed self-complacency, all served to carry off and qualify his rage. He dealt with his foes as a kitten with a mouse. They furnished him with so much amusement, and he made others so merry with them, that he began rather to like them than otherwise. The most of them, besides, were so far his inferiors in intellect, that they exerted no magnetism sufficient to draw forth the full riches of his wrath. If he felt deep and deadly animosity to any, it was to Peel, Burdett, and Brougham.

How different from Junius! Cobbett at most hates; Junius loathes. Cobbett splashes pails of dirty water over his enemies; Junius deals in drops, but they are drops of prussic acid. Cobbett knocks down his opponents; Junius steps up and softly whispers in their ear a sentence, an insinuation, a syllable, which withers the very heart within them. To express, by a change of figure, a change of mood and manner in both, Cobbett often covers his enemy with nicknaffés, which stick but do not scorch; such toys are beneath the deep long hate of Junius: he scatters firebrands, arrows, and death.

From health and good-humour, blended with a keen sense of the ridiculous, sprung his faculty of humour, one of the most curious of all his gifts. It is in him at one time the power of singling out minute absurdities in the conduct, character, style of writing, appearance, or names of his opponents, and by endless repetitions enlarging their ridiculous aspect, till you, the reader, become a mere *alias* of laughter holding both his sides. It is at another time produced by culling the oddest and lowest figures and allusions from the barnyard or the dunghill, and hanging those mud-garlands about the necks of dignitaries, prelates, statesmen, of majesty itself, till they look supremely ridiculous. Sometimes he secures his ludicrous effects by the mere daring effrontery of his onset, as in his celebrated chapter, "Errors and Nonsense in a King's Speech;" often by the unexpected introduction of political or personal allusions amid serious or indifferent subjects; sometimes, as we have seen, by the dexterous use of nicknames and slang, and often by the sheer power of luxuberant and dauntless egotism.

He had very little of what is strictly called wit, or the power of perceiving unexpected resemblances and contrasts, and no dry severe irony. Coleridge defined Swift as the soul of Rabelais in a dry place. Cobbett may perhaps be defined the soul of Swift in a softer, sunnier, *sappier* place. Swift's humour was mechanical: he himself derived neither good nor pleasure from the lavish mirth he distributed to others. Cobbett, on the contrary, was compelled by his own tickling sensations to tickle the whole world besides; his humour was not a voluntary exercise of power, but a vent for surcharged emotion. His gift, as Shakspere has it, of "iteration" he turned to account for more purposes than those of humour. His arguments, his facts, as well as his favourite nicknames, such as the "Wen," "Old Bloody," the "Press-gang," &c., he repeated again and again. He sat, like a "starling," opposite the treasury and the bank, and hallooed out what he deemed offensive truths, and recounted untoward events, the more partinaciously that the truths were offensive, and that the events had been untoward. And then, worst of all, his croaking was so unlike that of all other croakers, it was so funny, so far from a dull monotony, founded so much on fact, and so widely listened to, that government, between amusement and provocation, were "perplexed in the extreme." They durst neither openly laugh nor cry. For here was no hunger-bitten scribbler, no lean Cassius, no wild-eyed, emaciated fanatic, but a joyous jolly prophet, six feet high and proportionably broad, whom it was difficult either to bribe or to kill, pouring out his endless predictions and warnings under the sign of a gridiron, on which it was quite as likely that they as that he should be roasted alive.

Was it from this practice of incessant repetition that there sprang that egotism with which he has been so often charged? Was it that, as he could not help talking about other things over and over again, so he could not help, much more, talking about himself? Cobbett, in fact, was not more an egotist than the majority of writers, only he spoke of himself directly, and not by implication. Some speak of themselves while praising their idols, and others while indulging their hobbies. But William Cobbett, a plain, blunt man, instead of veiling his egotism under the guise of sentimental sonnets, or working it up into imaginary conversations, or throwing it out into imaginary heroes, writes it down as plain "as downright

Shippen or as old Montaigne." We must say we like this trait in his character, believing that there is often more of the spirit of egotism discovered in avoiding than in using its language. Why, the editorial word "we" contains in it the *double*-distilled essence of egotism, modest as it looks. And how much intolerable self-conceit is concealed under the phrases "we humbly think," "it appears to us," and "our feeble voice," &c. Cobbett was as great an enemy to shams as Carlyle. He had a vast notion of himself, and he took every opportunity, proper and improper, of declaring it. Unlike the boy Tell, "he was great, *and* knew how great he was." His opinion, at any rate, was perfectly sincere, and as such required, nay, demanded, expresssion. He felt himself, and was, a genuine man, among mewing and moping, painted and gilded, starred, gartered, and crowned phantoms; and who shall quarrel with him because ever and anon he touched his strong sides and brow with his strong arm, and said, "Here I am—this is solid, were all else the shadow of a shade?" Bulwer, our readers are aware, thought proper, many years ago, to quarrel with the use of the anonymous in periodical literature. We think that Cobbett had been a worthier champion for supporting this quarrel than Sir Edward. No mask or visor would ever have become or fitted him. His personality seen at every turning in the lane, every opening in the hedge of his argument, his abuse, or his humour, was his power. He was not a knight of chivalry, bearing no device upon his shield, and covering his face in the hollow of his helm, but a Tom Cribb or Spring, open-faced, strong, stripped, and ready to do battle with all comers. The anonymous seemed to him anti-English, and he resigned it to the Italians, the "Press-gang," and the author of Junius.

Cobbett was purely an English writer. He seemed, even more than Churchill, the most stiking personification of John Bull. There were the brawny form, the swagger, the blustering temper, the broad humour, the pertinacity, the variability, the dogmatic prejudice, the rudeness, the common sense, the sagacity, the turbulence, the gullosity, and the pugnacity of a genuine Englishman as ever drank beer, bolted bacon, or flourished singlestaff. How he could upon occasion flatter national prejudices and prepossessions! How he could stir up into absolute springtide the English blood! How he used to pelt, when he pleased, the French and the Scotch! What a chosen champion to the chaw-bacons! It is not too much to say that he understood his countrymen as well as Napoleon did the French, and, had he possessed the fighting talent, could, in the event of a revolution, have led it and risen upon its wave. As it was, for a season he was the real king of the masses, and even after, through want of discretion, he lost his sovereignty, his rebel subjects, as often has happened in the history of rebellions, frequently felt their hearts palpitating, their ears tingling, and their knees instinctively bending, to the voice of their ancient leader.

A pleasing feature in Cobbett's character was his love for the country. We remember him, in one of his "Registers," expressing his wonder that one like himself, who relished intensely all rural sights and sounds, should have passed so large a portion of his life amid the smoke, and din, and strife of cities. It was not, indeed, the great features of nature that he admired; its more ethereal aspects, and that mysterious symbolic relation which it bears to the nature and history of man, he did not comprehend, and would have laughed at any one who pretended to do. We can fancy him thus criticising Emerson:—"Wonders will never cease. Here comes a Yankee prophet—yes, a Yankee prophet—talking transcendental (query, transcendent?) nonsense by the yard, and trying to get that gullible goose John Bull to listen to him, at the rate of seven guineas for each hour's lecture. He'd better—for us, at any rate—have stopped at home, and fed his pigs, or prophesied to his henroost. May I be roasted on a gridiron, if there's not more sense in this one number of the 'Twopenny Trash' than in all that this man Emerson ever wrote, or ever will write till his last

breath. And yet who'll pay me seven guineas for each of my lectures! This half-crazy quack, I am told, pulls down the old prophets, Jeremy, Daniel, and the rest, and sets himself up in their stead, as prophet Ralph Waldo. I venture to predict to prophet Ralph, that he won't see Boston Bay again ere his gulls would rather by twenty times have their guineas in their pockets than his lectures in their memories. But I beg Ralph's pardon, for it's not in the power of any mortal man, I'm told, to mind one word that Ralph says to them, or to come off with anything but a general notion that they have been quacked out of their sixpences. They say that the fellow is rather good-looking, a glib talker, and has a smattering of the German, but never gives his hearers one good round *fact* in all his lectures; has no statistics or arguments either; and you would never guess, while hearing him, whether you were in America or England, the earth or the moon. But enough of prophet *Raff*. I hope I have settled his hash as effectually as I did that of a much cleverer fellow, squinting prophet Ned, of Hatton Garden."

Thus Cobbett would have thought and said. And yet, while utterly incapable of feeling, and of affecting to feel, a high ideal view of nature, he loved sincerely and passionately this green earth, its fresh breezes, its soft waters, and its spring sky, the blue bridal-curtain of the youthful season. He cared nothing for the stars; these, which are rather like paintings than works of nature, he disregarded nearly as much as he did the pictures of man's pencil; he loved the moon only as it lighted up the harvest-field; but the hedgerows, the trees, and the corn-fields of merry England grew in his heart, and waved over and cooled the stream of his life's blood. It is pleasant to come upon such passages in his pages. We linger and coo over them, like a breeze caught amid the woods which surround some spot of insulated loveliness. They raise and soften our opinion of the man; and, whenever we are disposed to think or speak harshly of William Cobbett, we are calmed by remembering his dying moments, when he requested to be carried round his farm, that he might see for the last time the fields which he loved so dearly. The fact that this desire was so strong at death itself, proved that it, and no lower or fiercer feeling, was his ruling passion.

From this love of homely, English nature, and from his minute habits of observation, sprang that abundant and picturesque imagery with which his writings abound. A fresh breeze from the "Farm" is always felt passing over his driest discussions, and mingling with his bitterest personalities. It is this which prevents him from being ever vulgar; for, as Hazlitt has remarked, Cobbett is never vulgar, though often coarse. And why? Because nature, though often coarse, is never vulgar—though often common, is never mean; and because Cobbett is never himself, and will never permit his reader to be, long or far away from the sweet balmy breath of nature. Coleridge, in one of his little poems, speaks of trying, by abstruse research, to steal from himself "all the natural man"—a process difficult, we suspect, in any case, but in Cobbett's, even had he made the attempt, impossible; for he was nothing, if not natural. Like a still coarser subject, Caliban, he seems newly dug out, and smelling strongly of the virgin earth.

What shall we say of his style? That it was a forcible and fit expression to his thought—little more. It did not pretend to be elegant; it was not so accurate as it pretended to be. It were not difficult retorting upon many passages of his own writing the lynx-eyed system of criticism which he directed against the slovenly compositions of Sidmouth and Wellington. In fact, no style can stand such criticism, just as the most beautiful countenance shrinks before the eye of the microscope. And let Blair's contemptible cavillings at the style of Addison—whose very errors, like the blunders of a beautiful child, are graceful and interesting—stand a perpetual monument of the folly of going too near to the masterpieces of literature. Cobbett's style is composed

of the purest Saxon, and proves, as well as Bunyan's (as Macaulay has remarked), what purposes that simple speech can serve. Subtle distinctions it could not have conveyed; but Cobbett had none such to convey. Under certain grandeurs of thought, it might, like Charon's boat, have creaked and trembled; but Cobbett required it only to express clear, common-sense logic, strong facts, and strong passions; to beat down his foes, and to cut his own way—and for such work it never failed him. Its general tone was that of a long rambling conversation; its principal design seemed to be, to make every smallest shade of his meaning perfectly clear; its windings and turnings, so distinct and vivid in their variety, reminded you of the *branching veins*—with all the repetitions of a law-paper, it was as lively and interesting as a novel. You might grin over it, or frown at it, or fling it from you in a fit of fury; but it was impossible to sleep over it, or to yawn over it, or to refrain from thinking as you read it. While statesmen amused themselves with the "Register" (amusement reminding you of the games in Pandemonium!) at their breakfast-tables; while the "Press-gang," their lips the while smacking, and their eyes glistening with delight, proceeded to answer and abuse it, the country parson was reading it in his after-dinner easy-chair, the Paisley weaver had it lying on his loom, and the weary ploughman in his cottage kept himself awake with its quaint and rich humours. Since the works of Burns, no writings were so much appreciated by all ranks and conditions of men. And the reason of this was to be found in their corresponding qualities. Clearness, simplicity, picturesque description, racy, reckless humour, big-boned, brawny strength, contempt of conventionalisms, rugged, self-trained reason—in one word, nature—were common to both. The "hairbrained sentimental trace," which was the peculiar poetic differentia of Burns, of course was wanting in Cobbett.

One curious but unquestionable cause of Cobbett's popularity we must also mention. It was his intense sympathy with that organ which those "masters of the mint," phrenologists, have, with their usual felicity of coinage, called "gustativeness." How he expands and rejoices in describing all sorts of savoury food! The droppings of Hermon's dew or of Hybla's honey are to him nothing, compared to the droppings from the sausage-pan or the roasting-jack of an English fireside! With what lively logic he undertakes the quarrel of "beer *versus* tea!" with what a deep bass he trolls out the old stave—"Oh, the roast-beef of Old England!" how profound and edifying his contempt for swipes and potatoes! how sublime he waxes over a sirloin! how pathetic his reminiscences of the good old days, when "mutton, veal, and lamb were the food of the commoner sort of people!" what a whet his "Register" made before dinner! and what a digestive after it! Here, again, he resembles Burns—who describes the homely food of Caledonia—her "souple scones"—her "curny ingans, mixed wi' spice," and the other ingredients of the haggis, "great chieftain o' the puddin' race"—with such infinite gusto; and Scott, whose books are the best appetisers in the world, and whose good digestion constituted, we venture to say, one-half of his physical, and one-fourth of his mental power.

In connection with this, we notice a vital defect in Cobbett's theory of man. He scarcely seems to have risen higher than the conception of him as an animal—a beef-bolting and beer-bibbing animal. If government, and his own strong hand, found him in those articles; and if William Cobbett were permitted to supply him with amusement, besides a little instruction in grammar, in arithmetic, and in the evil effects of priestcraft and potatoes, of gin and tea, he might consider himself satisfied. And this was his theory of human life! this his recipe for human woes! this his mode of filling the infinite cravings of the human heart! And yet, ere laughing at this "Gospel according to St Cobbett," and calling it a piggish panacea for a race of erect pigs, let us remember that the fashionable utilitarians of our own day, such as Combe and Chambers, do not rise much higher. They trace

man's origin from the brutes; they, by implication, deny his natural superiority to the brutes; and, consequently, his natural immortality. Denying he was made in God's image, how can they conceive he is ever to reach it? They systematically overlook his relation to his Maker. They would cut—the puny insects!—that awful tie which from the beginning has bound our race to the throne of the Eternal! They would, with frantic but feeble hands, quench the only authentic fire of revelation which ever shone from heaven! They would arrest, if they could, the wheels of that coming Jesus, before whose throne every knee shall bow, and whose authority every tongue shall confess! They would indeed clothe man with more accomplishments than Cobbett's rude nature recognised; they would teach man (on the brink of annihilation) to dance, and sing, and play, and recite verses, and babble of green fields, and chatter science, as well as to eat and to drink; but no more than he would they have him to expand in the prospect, and to shine in the radiance, of the future destinies of his immortal being! In fact, we value Cobbett's theory as the *reductio ad absurdum* of the utilitarian view; and we fancy we hear the old serjeant growling out to those bastards of Bentham—"If you believe that man is to perish at death, like a pig, why bother yourselves with teaching him languages, music, and science? *Fill his belly, you fools, and send him to sleep.*"

But we must not part in bad humour with Cobbett, nor with anybody else. Pity, after all, is the most appropriate feeling to entertain towards those who judge so meanly of man. And for Cobbett, especially, there are many grounds of excuse—from his early circumstances—from his want of a spiritual education—from the sight of human nature, in its worst forms, which he had in the army—and from the scrambling and precarious life he was compelled to lead afterwards.

Besides those separate works of his which are so well known, such as his "Cottage Economy," "Legacy to Parsons," his "Life" of himself, and his "English and French Grammars," &c., we should like to see some judicious hand employed in making selections from the "Register." We despair, indeed, of ever finding the "Beauties of Cobbett" collected into such a nosegay as ladies would like to handle and to smell. Indeed, the term "Beauties of Cobbett" would seem sufficiently affected and inappropriate. But some one, surely, might give us a collection of Cobbett's "*good, strong, and true things.*" Nay, let us have some of his shadows, as well as his lights; some of his racier and more characteristic faults, a prudent selection from his vocabulary of slang, some of his richer passages of egotism, a few of his predictions that have not, and *others that have been* fulfilled—such a book, in short, as he himself would have acknowledged as a faithful likeness, and as should convey to posterity a just impression of a great English author.

LORD JEFFREY.

Lord Jeffrey, like many remarkable men of our era, was a striking instance of many-sidedness: critic, lawyer, politician, judge, are some of the phases in which he exhibited his spirit in the course of a long and active existence. As a critic, he stood in "glorious and well-foughten field" side by side with the chivalry of Hazlitt. As a pleader, he was equalled at his native bar by Cockburn alone. As a philosopher, besides the general vein of subtle reflection which pervades all his writings, he, in one beautiful region of metaphysics, excelled the elegant Stewart and the captivating Alison. As a politician, he was a model of uprightness and consistency. And as a judge, he has, it is universally understood, gathered new and verdant laurels.

With the name of Jeffrey, the idea of

the "Edinburgh Review" is inseparably connected. For nearly thirty years he was its conductor; and, though backed by a host of varied talent, he might truly be called its life and soul: the spirit of the editor was seen in every article, in every page. Even the bolder, coarser, and more original writers who contributed to it became insensibly tinctured by the pervading tone—of polite badinage, of refined sarcasm, of airy cleverness—which was the established *esprit de corps*. To this, the wild sallies of Sidney Smith, the fierce sarcasms and darker passions of Brougham, the eloquent gall of Hazlitt, had all to be subservient; and smoothed down they must often have been under the cautious and tasteful influence of the editor, ere they met the public eye. And hence the rapid and boundless popularity of the "Review." It succeeded, because it came forth, quarter after quarter, not a chaos of jarring though ingenious speculations, but a regular and brilliant whole; and the principle of fusion was unquestionably the accomplished mind of Jeffrey. During the earlier part of his career, he was the ideal of an editor, not writing the half, or perhaps the tithe of his periodical, but, far better, breathing his own spirit as a refining and uniting principle over the whole.

Lord Jeffrey's character, as a critic, is now very generally agreed on. When he criticised an author whom he thoroughly appreciated, he was a refined, and just, and discriminating judge. He threw his whole spirit into the work; he executed his analysis in a fine and rapid style; he brought out not merely the meaning, but the soul of his author; he threw a number of pleasing, if not profound, lights upon his subject; he expressed the whole in beautiful and buoyant, rich and rapid diction; and there stood a criticism airy as the gossamer, brilliant as the glow-worm, yet solid as the pillared firmament. Witness his reviews of Crabbe, which by their timely aid lifted the modest and exquisite, but half-forgotten, writer into his just place, threw a friendly veil over his frequent asperity and coarseness, and were, in short, his salvation as a poet, just as Burke's fatherly interference was his fortune as a man. Who that has read, retains not a vivid and pleasing memory of his reviews of Campbell's "Gertrude," and Campbell's "Specimens of the English Poets," particularly the latter; of his kindly and eloquent panegyric on Hazlitt's "Characters of Shakspere's Plays;" of his laboured and masterly analysis of Moore's "Lalla Rookh;" of his honest and powerful article on Lord Byron's Tragedies; and high above all these, of perhaps the finest piece of elegant philosophising in the language, the review of Alison's "Taste," afterwards matured and expanded into the article "Beauty," in the "Encyclopædia Britannica?" Nor were his doings in the way of quiz and cutting-up at all inferior in their way. We will not soon forget that most witty and wicked running commentary which he kept up for many years on Southey's interminable productions; nor did the laureate till his dying day. We entertain a keen memory of his annihilation of a host of poetasters, from Dermody down to Hayley; his attempted demolition of that clever transgressor Tommy Little, who, however, showed fight; and his incessant persevering, powerful, but unsuccessful attempts to make Samuel Taylor Coleridge and William Wordsworth the laughingstocks of the world. And this brings us to what would require a volume for its elucidation, the sore subject of the faults, errors, and delinquencies of the "Edinburgh Review." In a word or two on the ungracious subject we must be indulged.

The great error of the early numbers was one incident to, perhaps inseparable from, the age of its principal writers. It lay in an air of levity and dogmatism, added to a sneering, captious, sceptical spirit, imbibed from intimacy with "Candide" and the "Philosophical Dictionary." It seemed their aim to transplant the "Encyclopædiast" spirit, in all its brilliant wickedness, into the Scottish soil. This appeared at first a hazardous experiment, but it was done so dexterously and so boldly, as, for the time, to be completely successful. Fired by success, its authors dared everything, sneered at every one,

attempted to solve the foundations of all things, in a flood of universal ridicule. They themselves, young men though they were, proclaimed themselves enemies to enthusiasm, in all its forms—in politics, in poetry, in religion. Whatever transcended the common standards of feeling and of thought, whatever towered up into the regions of the extravagantly sublime, diverged into the eccentric, struck into the original and the bold, or aspired towards the infinite, they sought to reduce and abate by the one sovereign receipt of indiscriminate and reckless sneering. The flower of German poetry, then opening its magnificent petals into day, they laughed to scorn, as if it had been a vulgar and gaudy weed, or a useless and noisome fungus. They assailed with bitter ridicule at once republicanism and methodism, careless of the fine spirit involved in, and extractable from both. But especially, from the first, they applied all their energies to the demolition of the Lake Poets, whose revolutionary genius was then threatening to alter the whole tone, and spirit, and matter, and manner of our literature. Of these attacks upon Wordsworth, Southey, and Coleridge, we have ever entertained one opinion. They were not savage and brutal assaults, like those of "The Quarterly" on Keats and Shelley, but they were, on this very account, the more formidable. Their sole aim, and it was for awhile successful, was to make the Lakers, not hateful, but ridiculous; to hold them up as a set of harmless, crazy men, overflowing with vanity and childish verse; not without genius, certainly, but their genius was by no means first-rate, and altogether neutralised by false taste and self-conceit. Such was the prevailing tone and style of those celebrated criticisms; and their effect was, first of all, to intensify, almost to madness, the egotism and the resolution of the parties assailed, to drive their works out of general circulation, to increase the attachment of their devoted adherents, and ultimately to provoke a reaction, the most signal and irreversible of which we have any example in the history of letters. The men whose names were, for twenty years, laughed at in every form of ridicule, and identified with all that was vain, silly, childish, egotistical, and affected, are now looked up to with universal love and reverence, and have been hailed by acclamation as leading stars in the bright host of our literary heaven. Let it be a lesson to succeeding critics for ever; and let us, in looking back upon the prophecies of those reviewers, which have not been fulfilled; their sneers, which have fallen powerless; their laughter, which has died away; their abuse, which time has robbed of its sting; their criticisms, on which experience has set the seal of worthlessness—blame not so much the men, as the false and bad system on which they acted, and draw the solid and sober inference, that ridicule is no more a test of poetry than it is of truth.

But to pass from this topic, on which, after all, we have only touched, we would now, in order fully to convey our idea of Lord Jeffrey's criticism, compare it with that of some others of his coadjutors and contemporaries. It wanted the racy originality, the springy strength, the tumultuous overflow of humour, which distinguished the author of "Peter Plymley's Letters;" but, on the other hand, possessed always a subtlety of distinction, and often a splendour of illustration, to which Sidney Smith had no pretensions. The one could no more have written a review of "Styles," than the other the review of Alison. It had not the massive strength of Brougham; but was superior in refinement and fluency, and never fell into his more offensive faults—the overbearing dogmatism, the arrogance, the fierce and truculent spirit, which breathes in more articles than in that on Don Pedro Cevallos. Less comprehensive, less *judicial*, less learned, than the criticism of MacIntosh, it was more lively, more varied, and animated by a sweeter, purer, and more natural vein of eloquence. It was not so glowing, or so imaginative, as the criticism of Wilson; but more subtle in its thinking, and more sober in its style. It wanted the nerve, the antithesis, the rich literary allusion, the

radiant fancy, the magnificent isolated pictures of Macaulay's elaborate writings; but had far less of the air of effort, of artifice, and of mannerism. It was inferior to that of Hazlitt, alike in solidity and in splendour. It had not his fierce sincerity; his intense but sinister acuteness; his discrimination, infallible as an instinct; his easy vigour; but, on the other hand, it was not disfigured by his fits of spleen, his bursts of egotistical passion, his paradoxes, his distortions, fantasies, and frenzies—the "pimples of red and blue corruption," which now and then bestud his uneasy and uneven, yet brilliant page. As specimens of pure and perfect English, of refined sense, expressed in lucid language, and studded with modest and magnificent ornaments, Jeffrey produced few compositions equal to those by which Robert Hall irradiated the early pages of the "Eclectic Review." Nor had his criticism the pith and profundity of Foster; nor the chary but precious encomium, the humour, the unearthly stand of laughing superiority to his author, assumed by Thomas Carlyle. But in versatility and vivacity, and in that happy conversational tone which can only be acquired by constant mingling with the best society, his works stood, and stand alone.

In the commencement of our sketch, we called the subject of it a philosopher; and, in employing with regard to him this term, we are justified, not merely by that spirit of refined and subtle thinking which pervaded his writings, but by one distinct contribution he made to metaphysical science. We are aware that, in his theory of the Beautiful, he could not claim the merit of originality; but what we mean, in ascribing to Lord Jeffrey the credit of it, is, that he first made the theory at once intelligible and generally popular; and became, if not the richest and most copious, the most distinct, succinct, memorable, and eloquent expounder of the astonishing conceptions involved in it. He first fully reconciled us, by his subtle argument and his glowing imagery, to what seemed the glaring paradox, or the insane idealism, that beauty resides not so much in the object as in the mind; that "we receive but what we give;" that our own soul is the urn which sprinkles beauty upon the universe; that flower and star are lovely, because the mind has breathed upon them; that the imagination and the heart of man are the twin beautifiers of the creation; that the dwelling of beauty is not in the light of setting suns, nor in the beams of morning stars, nor in the waves of summer seas, but in the human spirit; that sublimity tabernacles not in the palaces of the thunder, walks not on the wings of the wind, rides not on the forked lightning, but that it is the soul which is lifted up there; that it is the soul which, in its high aspirings, "yokes itself with whirlwinds and the northern blast," and scatters grandeur around it on its way. To him be the praise, along with Alison, of first popularising the conceptions which had passed before for the reveries of poets and philosophers, that the universe is but a great mirror of the mind of man; that, in contemplating the fairest scene, we are ourselves more than half creating its beauty; and that, in standing on a mountain summit, we are "monarchs of all we survey," in a new sense, by giving to the gardens their freshness, to the lakes their spiritual calm, to the forests their majesty, to the torrents their tempestuous joy, to the distant snow-clad hills their look of serene eternity; nay, by lending the light of imagination and of love to the clouds, and reflecting upwards the depth and dignity of our own feelings upon all the "dread magnificence of heaven." He also first brought fully into view that singular power we possess, of shedding beauty and interest on the darkest, the dreariest, and the tamest scenes and circumstances, by the mere magic of our own clustering associations; so that there is no object in nature but may, to some eye, appear wreathed with a halo; so that not only the "meanest flower that blows, can give thoughts which do often lie too deep for tears," but even weeds, thorns, and thistles may, to certain visions, appear lovelier than the fairest minions of the garden; so that such objects as single

moss-covered stones, withered and stunted trees, grave-yards putrefying in the heart of populous cities, moors cold and wet in winter time, sullen and shapeless hills, marshes given over to desolation from immemorial ages, bones unearthed by the stony spade of the sexton, wo-begone and emaciated visages, cheeks burning in fever, faces sharpened by hunger or decay, eyes glaring in frenzy, &c., may, in some minds, through this strange mental magic, excite more emotion and interest than the stars of the sky, than woods of loveliest umbrage, than the quiet kirkyards of our pastoral solitudes, than sun-sprinkled lakes, than aerial and peaked summits, than bean or clover fields at evening, than the mausoleums of monarchs, or than the shining faces of happy infants, rejoicing youths, bold bridegrooms, brides blushing and trembling at their own joy, poets smiling at the rising splendours of their imagery, enthusiasts starting from dreams of heaven; so that ugliness is henceforth not a positive, but a relative term, if it be not exhaled utterly from the universe; so that the soul of man becomes the true philosopher's stone, able to turn very dross and defilement into gold; so that all the works of God thus, and thus only, appear to be "very good." Jeffrey, we repeat, did not originate these wonderful ideas, but he formed the first comprehensive and intelligible digest of them. He first circulated them in a light and fascinating form, and supported them by many original arguments and illustrations. Need we allude to what has probably occurred to the minds of our readers as the finest of all these—indeed one of the most beautiful passages in our literature—the contrast drawn between the quiet, calm scenery of England, and the stern grandeur of a Highland landscape, with its "mountain echoes repeating the scream of the eagle and the roar of the cataract."

As a pleader and public speaker, he enjoyed for many years ere death what might be called a great traditional reputation. Only the echoes of that eloquence with which the Parliament House, the Assembly Rooms, the Pantheon, were made to ring, long remained to tell what it had been. The author of this critique heard him once, in peculiarly interesting circumstances. It was at the meeting which took place in Edinburgh, immediately after the death of Sir Walter Scott, to commemorate his memory. There appeared at it the *élite* of Dunedin society; the flower of its literature, of its fashion, of its resident nobility. Men of all parties came that day to the Assembly Rooms (so Lord Jeffrey said) "as into the temple of the Deity," burying their animosities in the grave of the mighty Wizard, and consenting to mourn, as one man, their common and inestimable loss. Lord Jeffrey's speech was not long, or loud, or vehement; it was a calm, manly, discriminating *eloge*, fit to be spoken by a great critic over the corpse of a greater poet, and delivered in tones which, now and then, quivered under the images they uttered, and under the burden of the occasion. And after him uprose the stalwart form, and pealed forth the solemn voice, of Professor Wilson, taking up his part in the threnody, and rolling out from his organ-chest a few deep notes of more passionate praise. We think we hear him still repeating the couplet—

"Ne'er to those dwellings, where the mighty rest,
Since their foundations came a nobler guest;"

and after he had described the sun "smiting the column erected to the departed," closing by the prediction, that he would

"A mightier monument command—
The mountains of his native land."

Lord Jeffrey's eloquence neither sought nor reached those giddy heights of imaginative and declamatory power which have ever been the element of Irish orators. It had not the pathos and rich diffusion of Curran, the antithesis and devouring energy of Grattan, Burke's prophetic fury, Sheridan's elaborate glare, or Sheil's brilliant froth. Nor was it a specimen of what is called Scottish oratory: it had not the mastery, the ardent animation, the crushing force, the demoniac bitterness of sarcasm, the variety

of resources, displayed by Brougham; nor the philosophical tone and laboured vehemence of MacIntosh; nor the energy, boldness, and superb bursts of Erskine; nor, to compare him with his brethren at the bar, had he the legal lore of Jameson; the coarse, Cobbett-like strength of John Clerk; the massive intellectuality of Moncreiff; nor the humour, feeling, and natural eloquence of Henry Cockburn. Nor was it what has been termed English oratory—that happy medium between the vertiginous flights of the Irish school, and the comparatively unimpassioned and unimaginative style of the Scottish: it had not the fervid excitement of Fox; nor the stately and sonorous roll of Pitt's oratory; nor the seductive and fascinating finish of Canning. It was a style entirely peculiar to himself —uncopied and inimitable—combining more than the subtlety of the lawyer with more than the eloquence of the barrister; uniting metaphysics and poetry, literature and law, in one subtle and winding whole; generally rapid and urgent; often brilliant; never pathetic; and rarely overpowering. It resembled rather a gay exhibition of fencing skill, than an earnest combat. It never sounded the depths of passion, nor did it scale the highest heaven of fancy. It possessed little stern sarcasm, no ebullient humour, but a great deal of refined wit, which played about the surface, instead of searing to the centre. His manner was the mere medium of his matter and his mind. His voice had not Brougham's thrilling whisper, or his high and harsh notes; nor the hoarse thunder of Chalmers; nor those wild and wailing cadences by which Wilson accomplishes his oratorical triumphs; but it was not devoid of a shrill yet mild melody, like that of a female tongue, which moved, pierced, and enthralled the spirit. Such was the oratory which, at one time, was the glory of the bar, of the bench, and of the public—the delight at once of the ladies and of the literati of the Modern Athens. Everybody knows that Lord Jeffrey, like Horne Tooke, Flood, and Sir Daniel Sandford, among the many whose fame had preceded them there, and who entered in the glare of great expectation, failed in Parliament. It is curious noting the causes of these respective failures. Horne Tooke's was attributed, by himself, to the fact of his being a clergyman; it is ascribed, by Hazlitt, a fairer judge in this case, to the coldness and pettiness of his manner, which was more that of a special pleader, than of a hearty and honest advocate. Small seemed the gimlet of his subtle discrimination and impalpable wit amid the terrible play of the axes and hammers which were then resounding within the walls of the British Senate; and what could a clever speechifier do, when planted beside the orators of England—Pitt, Fox, Sheridan, Windham, and Burke? Flood was too coarse for the atmosphere of the English Parliament, although, like Grattan, he entered it in one of those deep lulls which succeed great storms of eloquence, and are peculiarly favourable to fresh aspirants. But then Grattan was a spirit of peculiar power, and cut his way into an English reputation by the sheer saw of his energy and his eye. Sir Daniel Sandford's failure surprised no one who knew him. A better teacher, indeed, never sat in a professor's chair. Hardly, in the high sense, a man of genius, he was a genuine enthusiast; his enthusiasm proved itself true by uplifting a load of the green fuel of affectation and mannerism, and piercing it with living flame. His tones, the glances of his dull yet speaking eye—the movements, somewhat theatrical, indeed, of his arms holding the plays of Sophocles, as you could conceive Sophocles himself to have held them, while reading one of them in his own behalf, all contributed to suck his students in within the *mare magnum* of Grecian lore, and to inspire a burning ardour of scholarship. He had not his predecessor, Young's, fiery bursts or sonorous pomp of style, or quantity of erudition; but, as a teacher, he was incomparably superior, and his soul lived along every line he read and word he uttered. But this was not suitable for the Parliament of our mechanical era. He failed, therefore, ignominiously—resented

it bitterly—returned, like Lord Grenville, to "Plato and to the Iliad," and died (of typhus fever) reciting Homer. Poor fellow, methinks we hear him now, reading one of his Saturday lectures, with his yearning voice; and with that face of his, which threw out, as he warmed with the theme, a certain pallid spiritual radiance, reminding us of that which breaks forth from the countenance of our friend the "Alchymist," when he has risen to the "height of his great argument," and sends out pure spirit, not blood, to report progress on his "dim and perilous way." Lord Jeffrey, again, ascribed his own failure on that dangerous floor to his age. He was "too old," he said, "to transplant." He had already, besides, secured all his great objects in life, and the applause, even of a senate, could add nothing to the fortune, and little to the fame, of the autocrat of critics. And, if even a college or provincial reputation be so prejudicial to the prospects of one who aspires to parliamentary renown, we can easily understand why the *prestige* of an European fame should, in his case, have raised the expectation to a pitch where it could not be gratified, particularly in an excited crisis, when common men had become energetic, and eloquent men had become something higher than themselves. Perhaps, had he appeared on the arena earlier, and in more favourable circumstances, the result had justified the most sanguine prognostications of his friends.

Of society, Lord Jeffrey was well known to be a distinguished ornament. His talk was gay, lively, witty, abundant, thickly garnished with those French epithets and turns of phrase which were the fashion in his youth. He shone not in monologue, but in sharp, short dialogue. It is told that, on one occasion, long before he was Lord Advocate, pleading a case at the bar of the House of Lords, he broke down, and disappointed grievously the many clever men who had assembled to hear him; but, in the rebound of his failure, had his revenge in the evening, at a private party, where he astonished the same critics, by the brilliance of his conversational bravuras. By the testimony of his very enemies, he was a high-minded and generous man. His liberality to poor authors—his general courtesy and urbanity of manners—his gaiety of disposition—his constant flow of soul—his superiority to the vulgar feelings of envy, jealousy, and political spite, were universally conceded. In the close of his life he commanded the avowed admiration and praise of his literary and political opponents. It was, for him, a proud moment, when the most formidable of these took the chair at a public dinner to his honour; and a pleasing remembrance it is for all who grieve to see men of worth and genius at variance, that the most eloquent and glowing panegyric ever pronounced on Francis Jeffrey came from the lips of John Wilson.*

* This sketch was originally written in Lord Jeffrey's lifetime. Seldom did the death of a celebrated man produce a more powerful impression on his own city and circle, and a less powerful impression on the wide horizon of the world. In truth, he had outlived himself. It had been very different, had he passed away thirty years ago, when the "Edinburgh Review" was in the plenitude of its influence. As it was, he disappeared like a star at midnight, while the whole heavens are white with glory, not like a sun going down that night may come up the universe. He was one of the acutest, most accomplished, most warmhearted, and most generous of men. May his infirmities be forgotten—his attacks on the Lakers and other critical commissions rot; but let his memory, and his many contributions to a refined and beautiful criticism, live for ever! Both he and Hazlitt reappear in an after part of these sketches.

SIDNEY SMITH.

It was the praise of Dryden, that he was the best reasoner in verse who ever wrote; let it be the encomium of Sidney Smith, that he was one of the best reasoners in wit of whom our country can boast. His intellect—strong, sharp, clear, and decided

—wrought and moved in a rich medium of humour. Each thought, as it came forth from his brain, issued as "in dance," and amid a flood of inextinguishable laughter. The march of his mind through his subject resembled the procession of Bacchus from the conquest of India—joyous, splendid, straggling—to the sound of flutes and hautboys — rather a victory than a march—rather a revel than a contest. His logic seemed always hurrying into the bosom of wit. Some men argue in mathematical formulæ; others, like Burke, in the figures and flights of poetry; others in the fire and fury of passion; Sidney Smith in exuberant and riotous fun. And yet the matter of his reasoning was solid, and its inner spirit earnest and true. But, though his steel was strong and sharp, his hand steady, and his aim clear, the management of the motions of his weapon was always fantastic. He piled, indeed, like a Titan, his Pelion on Ossa, but at the oddest of angles; he lifted and carried his load bravely, and like a man, but laughed as he did so; and so carried it, that beholders forgot the strength of the arm in the strangeness of the attitude. He thus sometimes disarmed anger; for his adversaries could scarcely believe that they had received a deadly wound, while their foeman was roaring in their face. He thus did far greater execution; for the flourishes of his weapon might distract his opponents, but never himself, from the direct and terrible line of the blow. His laughter had often a stunning effect. In this mood—and it was his common one—what scorn was he wont to pour upon the opponents of Catholic emancipation; upon the enemies of all change in legislation; upon any individual or party who sought to obstruct measures which, in his judgment, were likely to benefit the country! Under such, he could at any moment spring a mine of laughter; and what neither the fierce invective of Brougham nor the light and subtle raillery of Jeffrey could do, his contemptuous explosion effected, and himself crying with mirth, he hoisted them toward heaven in ten thousand comical splinters. Comparing him with other humorists of a similar class, we might say, that, while Swift's ridicule resembles something between a sneer and a spasm (half a sneer of mirth, half a spasm of misery)—while Cobbett's is a grin—Fonblanque's a light, but deep and most significant smile—Jeffrey's a sneer, just perceptible on his fastidious lip—Wilson's a strong, healthy, hearty laugh—Carlyle's a wild unearthly sound, like the neighing of a homeless steed—Sidney Smith's is a genuine *guffaw*, given forth with his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength. Apart from his matchless humour, strong, instinctive, rough, and knotty sense was the leading feature of his mind. Everything like mystification, sophistry, and humbug, fled before the first glance of his piercing eye; everything in the shape of affectation excited in him a disgust as "implacable" as even a Cowper could feel. If possible, with still deeper aversion did his manly nature regard cant in its various forms and disguises; and his motto in reference to it was, "spare no arrows." But the mean, the low, the paltry, the dishonourable, in nations or in individuals, moved all the fountains of his bile, and awakened all the energy of his invective. Always lively, generally witty, he is never eloquent, except when emptying out his vials of indignation upon baseness in all its shapes. His is the ire of a genuine "English gentleman, all of the olden time." It was in this spirit that he recently explained, in his own way, the old distinctions of Meum and Tuum to Brother Jonathan, when the latter was lamentably inclined to forget them. It was the same sting of generous indignation, which, in the midst of his character of MacIntosh, prompted the memorable picture of that extraordinary being, who, by his transcendent talents and his tortuous movements—his head of gold, and his feet of miry clay—has become the glory, the riddle, and the regret of his country, his age, and his species.

As a writer, Smith is little more than a very clever, witty, and ingenious pamphleteer. He has effected no permanent *chef d'œuvre;* he has founded no school;

he has left little behind him that the "world will not willingly let die;" he has never drawn a tear from a human eye, nor excited a thrill of grandeur in a human bosom. His reviews are not preserved by the salt of original genius, nor are they pregnant with profound and comprehensive principle; they have no resemblance to the sibylline leaves which Burke tore out from the vast volume of his mind, and scattered with imperial indifference among the nations; they are not the illuminated indices of modern history, like the papers of Macaulay; they are not specimens of pure and perfect English, set with modest but magnificent ornaments, like the criticisms of Jeffrey or of Hall; nor are they the excerpts, rugged and rent away by violence, from the dark and iron tablet of an obscure and original mind, like the reviews of Foster; but they are exquisite *jeux d'esprit*, admirable occasional pamphlets, which, though now they look to us like spent arrows, yet assuredly have done execution, and have not been spent in vain. And as, after the lapse of a century and more, we can still read with pleasure Addison's "Old Whig" and "Freeholder," for the sake of the exquisite humour and inimitable style in which forgotten feuds and dead logomachies are embalmed, so may it be, a century still, with the articles on "Bentham's Fallacies," and on the "Game Laws," and with the letters of the witty and ingenious Peter Plymley. There is much, at least, in those singular productions—in their clear and manly sense—in their broad native fun—in their rapid, careless, and energetic style—and in their bold, honest, liberal, and thoroughly English spirit, to interest several succeeding generations, if not to secure the "rare and regal" palm of immortality.

Sidney Smith was a writer of sermons, as well as of political squibs. Is not their memory eternised in one of John Foster's most ponderous pieces of sarcasm? In an evil hour, the dexterous and witty critic came forth from behind the fastnesses of the "Edinburgh Review," whence, in perfect security, he had shot his quick glancing shafts at Methodists and Missions, at Christian Observers and Eclectic Reviews, at Owens and Styles, and (what the more wary Jeffrey, in the day of his power, always avoided) became himself an author, and, *mirabile dictu*, an author of sermons. It was as if he wished to give his opponents their revenge; and no sooner did his head peep forth from beneath the protection of its shell, than the elephantine foot of Foster was prepared to crush it in the dust. It was the precise position of Saladin with the Knight of the Leopard, in their memorable contest near the Diamond of the Desert. In the skirmish, Smith had it all his own way; but when it came to close quarters, and when the heavy and mailed hand of the sturdy Baptist had confirmed its grasp on his opponent, the disparity was prodigious, and the discomfiture of the light horseman complete. But why recall the memory of an obsolete quarrel and a forgotten field? The sermons—the *causa belli*—clever but dry, destitute of earnestness and unction—are long since dead and buried; and their review remains their only monument.

Even when, within his own stronghold, our author intermeddled with theological topics, it was seldom with felicity or credit to himself. His onset on missions was a sad mistake; and, in attacking the Methodists and John Styles, he becomes as filthy and foul-mouthed as Swift himself. His wit forsakes him, and a rabid invective ill supplies its place; instead of laughing, he raves and foams at the mouth. Indeed, although an eloquent and popular preacher, and in many respects an ornament to his cloth, there was one radical evil about Smith: *he had mistaken his profession*. He was intended for a barrister, or a literary man, or a member of Parliament, or some occupation into which he could have flung his whole soul and strength. As it was, but half his heart was in a profession which, of all others, would require the whole. He became, consequently, a rather awkward medley of buffoon, politician, preacher, *litterateur*, divine, and diner-out. Let us grant, however, that the ordeal was severe, and that, if a very

few have weathered it better, many more have ignominiously broken down. No one coincides more fully than we do with Coleridge in thinking that every literary man should have a profession; but, in the name of common sense, let it be one fitted for him, and for which he is fitted —one suited to his tastes as well as to his talents—to his habits as well as to his powers—to his heart as well as to his head.

As a conversationist, Sidney Smith stood high among the highest—a Saul among the tribe of Titans. His jokes were not rare and refined, like those of Rogers and Jekyll; they wanted the slyness of Theodore Hooke's inimitable equivoque; they were not poured forth with the prodigal profusion of Hood's breathless and bickering puns; they were rich, fat, unctuous, always bordering on farce, but always avoiding it by a hair's-breadth. No finer cream, *certes*, ever mantled at the feasts of Holland House than his fertile brain supplied; and, to quote himself, it would require a "forty-parson power" of lungs and language to do justice to his convivial merits.

Sidney Smith we never saw, and his *personnel*, therefore, we cannot describe. We always figure him, however, to ourselves, as a "round, fat, oily man of God," with a strongly marked forehead, and an unspeakable twinkle in his eye. How far this resembles the original, we leave others to determine. Altogether, "we could have better spared a better man." Did not his death "eclipse the gaiety of nations?" Did not a Fourth Estate of Fun expire from the midst of us? Did not even Brother Jonathan drop a tear, when he thought that the scourge that so mercilessly lashed him was broken? And shall not now all his admirers unite with us in inscribing upon his grave—"Alas! poor Yorick!"

DELTA.*

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THE name, or rather mark, of Δ is a magic mark throughout the entire kingdom of British literature. The gentleman who chooses thus to subscribe himself is favourably known as a poet, as a writer on medical literature, as the author of a very successful Scottish novel, yclept "Mansie Wauch," as one of the principal contributors and conductors of "Blackwood's Magazine," and as a most amiable and accomplished private person. Nor are we sure if, all things considered, any man, whether in England or Scotland, could have been singled out, who was likely to manage the difficult and complicated subject of these lectures in a *safer*, a more candid, and less exceptionable style, than Dr Moir—especially before an audience so constituted, that one-half came probably with the notion (however ludicrous this presumption may seem to all others) that any one of themselves might have treated the subject better than he!

But, apart altogether from the composition of his audience—peculiar and unique, we believe, in the world—Delta has nobly effected his purpose. That was to express honestly and in simple language, without shrinking, and without show, his *own* views and feelings as to our last half-century's poetical literature. And it is fortunate for us, and all his readers, that these are the views of no narrow sectarian, or sour bigot, or self-conceited and solemn twaddler—but of an enlightened, wide-minded, and warm-hearted man, whose very errors and mistakes are worthy of respectful treatment, and all of whose opinions are uttered from the sincerity of an honest heart, and in the eloquent and dignified language of a poet.

* Sketches of the Poetical Literature of the Past Half-Century, delivered before the Edinburgh Philosophical Association, by DELTA.

Had we a thousand pens, each should run on, like that of "a ready writer," in the praise of poetry. Assuredly, among the many sweets which God has infused into the cup of being, among the many solaces of this life, the many relics of the primeval past, the many foretastes of the glorious future, there are few more delicious than the influences of poetry. It transports us from the dust and discord of the present troubled sphere into its own fair world. It "lays us," as Hazlitt beautifully says, "in the lap of a lovelier nature, by stiller streams and fairer meadows;" it invigorates the intellect by the elevated truth which is its substance; it enriches the imagination by the beauty of its pictures; it enlarges the mental view by the width and grandeur of its references; it inflames the affections by the "touch ethereal of its fiery rod;" it purifies the morals by the powers of pity and terror; and, when concentrated and hallowed, it becomes the most beautiful handmaid in the train of faith, and may be seen with graceful attitude sprinkling the waters of Castalia on the roses in the garden of God. The pleasures which poetry gives are as pure as they are exquisite. Like the manna of old, they seem to descend from a loftier climate—not of the earth, earthy, but of celestial birth, they point back to heaven as their future and final home. They bear every reflection, and they awaken no re-action. A night with the Muses never produces a morning with the Fiends. The world into which poetry introduces is always the same. The "Sun of Homer shines upon us still." The meadows of genius are for ever fresh and green. The skies of imagination continually smile. The actual world changes—the ideal is always one and the same—Achilles is always strong—Helen is always fair—Mount Ida continually cleaves the clouds—Scamander rushes ever by—the Eve of Milton still stands ankle-deep in the flowers of her garden—and the horn of Fitzjames winds in the gorge of the Trosachs for evermore. And when we remember that above the storms and surges of this tempestuous world there rises in the pages of the poet a fairy realm, which he who reads may reach, and straightway forget his sorrow, and remember his poverty no more, we see the debt of gratitude we owe to poetry, and, looking at the perennial peace and loveliness which surround her wherever she goes, we feel entitled to apply to her the beautiful lines originally addressed to the bird of spring:—

"Sweet bird, thy bower is ever fair,
Thy sky is ever clear;
Thou hast no sorrow in thy song,
No winter in thy year."

Love—pure, refined, insatiable affection—for the beautiful forms of this material universe, for the beautiful affections of the human soul, for the beautiful passages of the history of the past, for the beautiful prospects which expand before us in the future—such love burning to passion, attired in imagery and speaking in music, is the essence and the soul of poetry. It is this which makes personification the life of poetry. The poet looks upon nature, not with the philosopher, as composed of certain abstractions, certain "cold material laws;" but he breathes upon them, and they quicken into personal life, and become objects as it were of personal attachment. The winds with him are not cold currents of air, they are messengers, they are couriers—the messengers of destiny, the couriers of God; the rainbow is not a mere prismatic effect of light; but to the poet, in the language of the Son of Sirach, "it encompasseth the heavens with a glorious circle, and the hands of the Most High have bended it." The lightning is not simply an electric discharge, it is a barbed arrow of vengeance, it is winged with death; the thunder is not so much an elemental uproar, as it is the voice of God; the stars are not so much distant worlds, as they are eyes looking down on men with intelligence, sympathy, and love; the ocean is not a dead mass of waters, it is a "glorious mirror to the Almighty's form;" the sky is not to the poet a "foul and pestilent congregation of vapours," it is a magnificent canopy "fretted with

golden fire," nay, to his anointed eye, every blade of grass lives, every flower has its sentiment, every tree its moral, and

"Visions, as poetic eyes avow,
Hang in each leaf, and cling to every bough."

This perpetual personification springs from that principle of love which teaches the poet not only to regard all men as his brethren, the whole earth as his home, but to throw his own excess of soul into dumb, deaf, and dead things, and to find even in them subjects of his sympathy, and candidates for his regard. It was in this spirit that poor Burns did not disdain to address the mouse running from his ploughshare as his "fellow-mortal," and bespeak even the ill-fated daisy, which the same ploughshare destroyed—say rather transplanted into the garden of never-dying song:—

"Wee, modest, crimson-tippit flower,
Thou'st met me in an evil hour,
And I maun crush below the stoure
Thy feeble stem;
To spare thee noo is past my power,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The blithesome lark, companion meet,
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet,
Wi' spreckled breast,
While upward springing, blithe to greet
The purpling East."

Nor, so long as love and the personifying principle springing from it exist, are we afraid for the decline or fall of poetry. Dr Moir, we humbly conceive, has a morbid and needless horror at the progress of science; he speaks with a sort of timid hope of "poetry ultimately recovering from the staggering blows which science has inflicted, in the shape of steam conveyance, of electro-magnetism, of geological exposition, of political economy, of statistics—in fact, by a series of disenchantments, original genius in due time must from new elements frame new combinations, and these may be at least what the kaleidoscope is to the rainbow, or an explosion of hydrogen in the gasometer to a flash of lightning on the hills. But this alters not my position—that all facts are prose until coloured by imagination or passion. From physic we have swept away alchymy, incantation, and cure by the royal touch; from divinity, exorcism, and *purgatory*, and excommunication; and from law, the trial by wager of battle, the ordeal by touch, and the mysterious confessions of witchcraft. In the foamy seas we can never more expect to see Proteus leading out his flocks; nor in the dimpling stream another Narcissus admiring his own fair face; nor Diana again descending on Latmos to Endymion. We cannot hope another Una 'making a sunshine in the shady place;' nor another Macbeth meeting with other witches on the blasted heath; nor another Faust wandering amid the mysterious sights and sounds of another May-day night. Robin Hoods and Rob Roys are incompatible with sheriffs and the county police; rocks are stratified by geologists exactly as satins are measured by mercers; and Echo, no longer a vagrant classical nymph, is compelled quietly to succumb to the laws of acoustics."

He says again, "Exactness of knowledge is a barrier to the laying on of that colouring by which alone facts can be invested with the illusive lines of poetry." And again, he defines "poetry the imaginative and limitless, and science the definite and true;" and says, "poetry has ever found 'the haunt and the main region of her song' either in the grace and beauty which cannot be analysed, or in the sublime of the indefinite. Newton with his dissection of the rainbow, Anson with his circumnavigation of the earth, and Franklin with his lightning-kite, were all disenchanters. Angels no longer alight on the Iris; Milton's 'sea-covered sea—sea without shore'—is a geographical untruth; and in the thunder men no more hear the voice of the Deity."

Thus far, Delta—and very beautiful and ingenious these illustrations are. But, first, many of the things he mentions, although banished from the province of belief, are not thereby banished from that of poetry, or of that quasi-belief which good poetry produces. Milton, nor Milton's age, believed in the

Heathen Mythology; and yet how beautifully has he made it subserve poetical purposes. Scott had no faith in ghosts or witchcraft, or the second sight, and yet he has turned them to noble imaginative account; and when he speaks of the second sight as being now "abandoned to the purposes of poetry," he truly describes a common process, the fact of which is fatal to Delta's theory—a process through which sublime and beautiful illusions of all kinds, cast out of man's understanding, take refuge in his imagination, and become a rich stock of materials for the poet. Godwin, too, did not believe in alchymy, and yet he has founded a magnificent prose-poem upon an alchymist's imaginary story.

Nay, secondly, the further we advance beyond the point of believing such illusions, their poetic value and power are often enhanced. An English boy, we venture to say, reads the "Arabian Nights" with more intense delight than did ever a boy in Bagdad. What comparison between all the ancient minstrels put together, and the minstrel lays or minstrel prose of Scott, who wrote in the nineteenth century? What grey primeval father ever felt, or could ever have expressed, the beauty of the feeling for the rainbow as Campbell has done? And did not John Keats—a Cockney youth—breathe a new poetic spirit into the Pagan Mythus, and throne its gods in statelier and more starry mansions than Homer or Æschylus themselves? Not only is a "thing of beauty a joy for ever," but its beauty swells and deepens with time. All those illusions to which Delta so eloquently refers—in medicine, law, and physics—although thrust forth from the inner shrine of truth, linger on, in their highest ideal shapes, in the beautiful porch of poetry. There stands still the Alchymist, the smoke of his great sacrifice to nature still crossing his countenance, and giving a mystic wildness to his aspect; there the Witch still mutters her spell, and thickens her infernal broth; there the Ghost disturbed tells, as he walks with troubled steps, the secrets of his prison-house, his own shadowy hair on end in its immortal horror; there the Marinere, returned from a far countrie, speaks of antres vast and deserts idle—of spectre ships sailing upon windless oceans—of spirits sitting amid the shrouds at midnight—of double suns and bloody rainbows; there Scheherezade continues her ever-wondrous and ever-widening tale; there still twangs the bow of Robin Hood, and wave the feathers of Rob Roy; there, as the Earthquake at times shakes the ground, it seems the spasm of an imprisoned giant; as a sunbeam of peculiar beauty slants in, Uriel is seen descending upon it; and as the thunder utters its tremendous monotony, there are still voices ready to exclaim, "God hath spoken once, yea, twice have I heard this, Power belongeth unto God." Still to fancy and to feeling—to imagination's quick ear, and to passion's burning heart—"all things are possible."

Thirdly, Delta, we think, unduly restricts the domain of poetry, when he strikes out from its map the provinces of the definite and the true. We grant that often poetry loves to wear a robe of moonlight, and a scarf of mist, as she walks along in her beauty. But there is also a severe, purged, and lofty poetry which delights in the naked light of truth—the clear shining of a morning without clouds. Such was the poetry of Homer, of Chaucer, and many others. Such is the principle part of what is called didactic poetry. Such poetry, too, is found in abundance in Scripture, and has obtained from critics the name of Gnomic, or Sententious Song. Now, it is certain that the advance of definite knowledge must tend to the perfectionment of this species of poetry, since it loves to deal with direct facts, definite propositions, and the higher of the works of art.

Fourthly, Delta omits to notice, that while some of those indefinitudes and sublimities in which poetry has often hitherto delighted to revel, may yield before advancing science and civilisation, others, of perhaps a grander cast, shall take their room. He is aware that in ancient demonology, next, or even superior, as an hour

for starting a spirit to the noon of night, was the *noon* of *day*. We are at present in a transition state. The sun of science has risen, but has not reached his meridian. Consequently, the poetry of science or of philosophy has not fully arrived. But arrive it shall, in due time, and in our notion must be of a far higher cast than the poetry of superstition—beautiful as that was, is, and must continue to be. Lucretius was in the rear of Epicurus—Milton after Luther—and Scott after Chivalry. We must wait for the advent of those poets who shall set to song the discoveries and philosophies of our day. Nay, even at present we can detect the germs of poetry in our advancing knowledge. We, for our parts, venture to hope that the "witching time" of *noon* is near. "Poetry," says one, "shall lead in a new age, even as there is a star in the constellation Harp which shall yet, astronomers tell us, be the polar star for a thousand years." May we not be fast nearing that star? All the sciences are already employed, and may yet be more solemnly enlisted into the service of poetic song. Botany shall go forth into the fields and the woods, collect her fairest flowers, and bind them with a chaplet for the brow of Poetry. Conchology from the waters and from the ocean shores shall gather her loveliest shells, and, hark! when uplifted to the ear of Poetry,

> "Pleased they remember their august abodes,
> And murmur as the ocean murmurs there."

As Anatomy continues to lay bare the human frame, so fearfully and wonderfully made, Poetry shall breathe upon the "dry bones," and they shall live. Chemistry shall lead Poetry to the side of her furnace, and show her transformations scarcely less marvellous and magical than her own. Geology, with bold yet trembling hand, lifting up the veil from the history of past worlds—from cycles of ruin and of renovation—shall allow the eye of Poetry to look down in wonder, and to look up in fire. And Astronomy shall conduct Poetry to her observatory, and mingle her own joy with *hers*, as they behold the spectacle of that storm of suns which is blowing in the midnight sky. In the prospect of the progress of this last science, indeed, we see opening up the loftiest of conceivable fields for the poet. Who has hitherto adequately sung the wonders of the Newtonian—how much less of the Herschelian heavens? And who is waiting, with his lyre in his hands, to praise the steep-rising splendours of the Rossian skies? We have the "Night Thoughts"—a noble strain, but a whole century behind the present stage of the science; but who shall write us a poem on "Night" worthy, in some measure, of the solemn yet spirit-stirring theme? Sooner or later it must be done. The Milton of Midnight must yet arrive.

Coleridge somewhere profoundly remarks, that all knowledge begins with wonder, passes through an interspace of admiration mixed with research, and ends in wonder again. Now what is true of knowledge is true of poetry. She, too, begins with wonder; and from this feeling have sprung her first rude and stuttering strains. Admiration, culture, the artistic *use* of the wonders of the past succeed, and to this stage we have now come. But we may yet rise, and that speedily, to a higher and almost ideal height, when the stationary unutterable wonder of the first poetic age shall be superadded to the admiration and art of the second, and when the new and perfect poetry shall include both. The infant, abashed at some great spectacle, covers his face with his little hands; the man stands erect, with curious kindling eye before it; the true philosopher imitates the attitude of the angels, who, nobler infants, "veil their faces with their wings." So poetry at first prattles bashfully, it then admires learnedly, and at last it bends, yet burns, in seraphic homage.

Visions go, but truths succeed or remain. The rainbow ceases to be the bridge of angels, but not to be the prism of God. The thunder is no longer the voice of capricious and new-kindled wrath, but is it not still the echo of conscience? and does it not speak to all the higher principles in the human soul? The universe has lost those imaginary shapes or

forms by which men of old sought to define and bound it; but it has, instead, stretched away indefinitely, and *become* that "sea without shore" of which Milton dreamed. The Genii imagined to preside over the Elements have vanished; but, instead of them, the Elements themselves have gained a mystic importance, and sit in state upon their secret thrones, till some new one power, perhaps, rises to displace and include them all. The car of Neptune scours the deep no more; but there is, instead, the great steam-vessel walking the calm waters in triumphant beauty, or else wrestling like a demon of kindred power with the angry billows. Apollo and the Muses are gone; but in their room there stands the illimitable, undefinable thing called Genius—the electricity of the intellect. Newton "dissected the rainbow," but left it the rainbow still. Anson "circumnavigated the earth," but it still wheels round the sun, blots out at times the moon, and carries a Hell of caverned mysterious fire in its breast. Franklin brought down the lightnings on his kite; but, although they said to him, "Here we are," they did not tell him, "This or that are we." In short, beauty, power, all the poetical influences and elements, retire continually before us like the horizon, and the end and the place of them are equally and for ever unknown.

Delta is, as all who are acquainted with him know, a man of genuine, though unobtrusive, piety. Every line of his poetry proves him a Christian. And it is on this account that we venture to ask him, in fine, how will this theory of his consort with the doctrine of man's immortal progress? how account for the ever-welling poetry of the "New Song?" and how explain the attitude of those beings who, knowing God best, admire him the most, praise him most vehemently, and pour out before him the richest incense of wonder and worship? *Here* is poetry surviving amid the very blaze of celestial vision; and surely we need not expect that any stage of mental advancement *on earth* can ever see its permanent decline or decay.

If we have dwelt rather long upon this point, it is because we think Delta's notion in reference to it is pushed forward somewhat prominently, and more than once, and because it is one of the few theories in the book which, while it has a general character, is susceptible of special objections. We have indeed still one or two of his minor statements to combat. But we pass, first, with sincere gratification, to speak of the main merits of his book.

The most prominent, perhaps, of these is Catholicity. He is a generous, as well as a just judge. He has looked over the poetry of the last fifty years with an eye of wise love. Finding two schools in our literature, which, after a partial and hollow truce, are gradually diverging, if not on the point of breaking out into open hostility, he has, in some measure, acted as a mediator between them. Not concealing his peculiar favour for the one, he is yet candid and eloquent in his appreciation of the demigods of the other. Adoring Scott, he is just to Shelley. He sees the fire mingled with mysticism, "like tongues of flame amid the smoke of a conflagration;" but he greatly prefers the swept hearth and the purged, clear, columnar flames of the ancient Homeric manner. Inclining to what he thinks the more excellent way, he does not denounce as a dunce or an impostor every one who has chosen, or who encourages others in choosing, another and a more perilous style. The energy and beauty of his praise show, moreover, its sincerity. False or ignorant panegyric may easily be detected. It is clumsy, careless, and fulsome; it often praises writers for qualities they possess not; or it singles out their faults for beauties, or by overdoing, overleaps itself, and falls on the other side. It now gives black eyes to the Saxon, and now fair hair to the Italian; commends Milton for his equality, Dryden for his imagination, Pope for his nature, and Byron for his truth. Very different with honest praise. It shows, first, by the stroke of a moment, the man it means, and after drawing a strong and hard outline of his general character, it makes the

finer and warmer shades flush over it gently and swiftly, as the vivid green of spring passes over the fields. And such always, or generally, is the distinct, yet imaginative, the clear and eloquent praise of Delta.

He goes to criticise, too, in the spirit of a poet. Prosaic criticism of poetry is a nuisance. A drunkard cursing the moon—a maniac foaming at some magnificent statue, which stands serene and safe above his reach—or a ruffian crushing roses on his way to midnight plunder, is but a type of the sad work which a clever, but heartless and unimaginative, critic often makes of works of genius. Nay, there is a class, less despicable, but more pernicious, who make their moods and states play the critic—now the moods of their mind, and now the states of their stomach, the verdicts of which, nevertheless, issued in cold oracular print, are received by the public as veracious. There is a set, again, whose criticisms are formed upon the disgustingly dishonest principle of picking out all the faults, and ignoring all the beauties, of a composition; and who do not give the faults even the poor advantage of showing them in their context. And there are those who judge of books by their publisher, or by the nation of their author, or by his profession, or by his reputed creed. It were certainly contemptible to allude to the existence of such reptiles at all, were it not that they are permitted to crawl in some popular periodicals; that they shelter under and abuse the shade of the "Anonymous;" and that they have prevailed to retard the wider circulation of the writings, without being able to check the spread of the fame, of some of the most gifted of our living men. To take one out of many cases, we simply ask the question, Have some of our leading London journals ever taken the slightest notice of any one of the works of perhaps the most eloquent and powerful genius at present alive in Britain — we mean Professor Wilson? And if this has been little loss to him, has it been less a disgrace to them? Delta is altogether a man of another spirit. He is at once a poet and a gentleman; and how fortunate were many of our critics, could he transfer even the lesser half of this fine whole to them? His genial enthusiasm never, or seldom, blinds his discriminating eyesight. And throughout all this volume he has praised very few indeed who have not, in some field or another of poetry, eminently distinguished themselves.

We mention again the wide knowledge of the poetry of the period which his lectures display. This bursts out, as it were, at every pore of the book. There is no appearance of cramming for his task, although here and there he does allude to writers who have either, *per se*, or *per alios*, been thrust into the field of his view. We notice, however, that he has made one or two important omissions. His silence as to Sydney Yendys, was, we understand, an oversight. The slip containing a criticism of "The Roman" accidentally *slipped* out as the printing was going on. It was the same with a notice of Taylor's "Eve of the Conquest." Other blanks there are, but, on the whole, when we consider the width of the field he has traversed, the marvel is that they are so few.

We have a more serious objection to state. It is with regard to the scale he has (in effect, though indirectly) constructed of our poets. Scott he sets "alone and above all;" then he places Wordsworth, Byron, Wilson, and Coleridge, on one level—Campbell, Southey, James Montgomery, Moore, and Crabbe, seem to stand in the next file; then come Pollock, Aird, Croly, and Milman; then Keats, Shelley, and Tennyson; and in fine, the οἱ πολλοί, the minor, or rising poets. Delta will pardon us if we have mistaken his meaning, but this has been the impression left on us by the perusal of his lectures. Now, admitting that Scott, in breadth, variety, health, dramatic and descriptive powers, was the finest writer of his age, yet surely he is not to be compared, *as a poet*, with many others of the time; nor, as a profound thinker and consummate artist, with such men as Wordsworth and Coleridge. As

a VATES, what proportion between him and Shelley, Keats, and Byron? In terseness and true vigour, he yields to Crabbe; and in lyrical eloquence and fire, to Campbell. Wilson, as a man of general genius and Shaksperian all-sidedness, is inferior to few men of any age; but, as a *poet*, as an *artist*, as a *writer*, has done nothing entitling him to rank with Byron, Wordsworth, and Coleridge. Campbell and Crabbe are commensurate names, but they rank as poets much more highly above Southey and Montgomery than Delta seems willing to admit. And, greatly as we admire Croly, Aird, and Pollok, we are forced to set Keats and Shelley at least beside them, in point of richness and power of genius, as well as of artistic capacity.

Delta, in his capacity of poet, is not uniformly national; but, as a critic, his heart beats most warmly, and his language flows out with most enthusiasm and fluency, toward the poets of Scotland. He has mingled with some of the noblest of English spirits, too; may, for aught we know, have climbed Helvellyn with Wordsworth; has, at any rate, "seated at Coleridge's bedside at Hampstead, heard him recite the 'Monody' to Chatterton, in tones, 'delicate, yet deep, and long drawn out;'" but he has evidently been on terms of more fond and familiar intercourse with the bards of his own country. He has sat occasionally at the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," has frequently walked with Aird through the sweet gardens of Duddingston, listened to Wilson sounding on his way as they scaled Arthur's Seat together, or to Hogg repeating "Kilmeny," mingled souls with poor William Motherwell, and crossed pipes with Dr Macnish, the modern Pythagorean, has read the "Course of Time" in MS., and now and then seen Abbotsford in its glory, while the white peak of the wizard's head was still shining amid its young plantations. Hence a little natural exaggeration in speaking of the men and the subjects he knows best—an exaggeration honourable to his heart, not dishonourable to his head, and which does not detract much from the value of his estimates; nay, it has enabled him, in reference to Scottish genius, to write with a fine combination of generous ardour and of perfect mastery. Cordially do we unite with him in condemning the gross affectations, the deliberate darkness, the foul smoke, and, above all, the assumption, exclusiveness, and conceit, which distinguish the writings of our minor mystics; and we have already granted that he is just in his estimate of the genius of many of the higher members of the school, and sincere in his desire to produce a reconciliation between them and their more lucid and classical brethren. Still we could have wished that he had entered more systematically and profoundly into the points of difference between the two schools, and the important æsthetical questions which are staked upon their resolution. He might, for instance, have traced the origin of mystical poetry to the fact that there are, in poetry as well as in philosophy, things hard to be understood, words unutterable, yet pressing against the poet's brain for utterance; have shown that the expression given to such things should be as clear and simple as possible; that the *known* should never be passed off for the *unknown* under a disguise of words (even as a full might be mistaken for a crescent moon, behind a cloud sufficiently thick), that a mere ambitious desire to utter the unknown should never be confounded with a real knowledge of any of its mysterious provinces; that, as no system of mystical philosophy is, as yet, complete, so it has never yet been the inspiration of a truly great and solid poem, although it has produced many beautiful *fragments* — that fragments are in the meantime the appropriate tongue of the mystical, as certainly as that there is no encyclopædia written in Sanscrit, and no continent composed of aerolites—that even great genius, such as Shelley's in the "Prometheus," has failed in building up a long and lofty poem upon a mystical plan—that alone, of British poets in this age, Coleridge so thoroughly comprehended the transcendental system, as to have been able to write its epic, which he has *not* done—

that much of the oracular poetry of the day is oracular nonsense, the spawn of undigested learning, or the stuff of morbid dreams—that the day for great mystical poems may yet come, but that meanwhile we are tempted to quote Dr Johnson's language (whose *spontaneous* and *sincere* sayings, by the way, are seldom if ever mistaken), in reference to William Law, and to apply it to our Brownings, Heraud, Patmores, &c. "Law fell latterly into the reveries of Jacob Behmen, whom he alleged to have been in the same state with St Paul, and to have seen *unutterable things;* but, were it even so, Jacob would have resembled St Paul still more, by *not attempting to utter them.*"

Chaos, no doubt, in its successive stages, was a poem, but it was not till it became creation that it was said of it, "It is very good." So often the crude confusions, the half-delivered thoughts, the gasping utterances of a true poet of this mystical form, have a grandeur and an interest in them, but they rather tantalise than satisfy; and when they pretend to completeness and poetic harmony, they are felt to insult as well as tantalise.

So far as Delta has erred on this subject, it is in that he has descried mystic poetry *per se*, and has not restricted himself to the particular and plentiful examples around him of bad and weak poetry "hiding itself, because it was afraid," among trees or clouds — intricacies of verse or perplexities of diction. But, even as from science advancing towards its ideal there may be expected to arise a severe and powerful song, so, when man becomes more conversant with the mysteries of his own spiritual being —more at home in those depths within him, which angels cannot see—and after he has formed a more consistent and complete theory of himself, his position in the universe, his relation to the lower animals and to the creation, his relations in society and to God — after, in one word, what is now called mysticism has become a clear and mighty tree, rising from darkness and clothing itself with day as with a garment, then may it not become musical with a sweet, a full, and a far-resounding poetry, to which Δ himself, notwithstanding all the characteristic *triangular* sharpness of his intellectual perceptions, would listen well pleased!

Our space is now nearly exhausted, otherwise we had something more to say about these lectures and their author. The faults we have had occasion to mention, and others we might name, have sprung from no defect of capacity or taste, but partly from the accident of his local habitation, partly from the generous kindliness of his heart—a noble fault—and principally from the false position he and all are compelled to assume, who enter on that grand arena of mutual deception and graceful imposture called the lecture-room. Having felt long ago, by experience and by observation, what grave *lies* lectures generally are, what poor creatures even men of genius and high talents often become ere they can succeed in lecturing, and how we yet want a name that can adequately discriminate or vividly describe the personage who feels himself at home on a lecture platform, we were abundantly prepared, by the words "six lectures," to expect a certain quantity of claptrap, and are delighted to find that in the book there is so little. We rejoice to see, by the way, from a recent glance at that repertory of wit and wisdom — Boswell's "Johnson"—that old Samuel entertained the same opinion with us of the inutility of lectures, and their inferiority to books as a means of popular education; and that, too, many years ere they had become the standing article of disgust and necessary nuisance which they seem now to be.

But, instead of dwelling on Delta's faults, or quoting any of the eloquent and beautiful passages in which his lectures abound, we close by calling on our readers to peruse for themselves. His book is not only worthy of his reputation, but is really one of the heartiest, sincerest, and most delightful works of criticism we have read for many a long year.

We almost tremble now to begin a criticism on any advanced and long-known

author. While we were writing a recent paper on Joanna Baillie, the news arrived of her death. While expecting the proof of the above article on "Delta," the melancholy tidings of his sudden decease reached us. Shall we say, in the language of Lalla Rookh,

"I never rear'd a fair gazelle,
To glad me with her soft black eye,
But when it came to know me well,
And love me, it was *sure to die!*"

About two months ago, the lamented dead opened up a communication with us, which promised to ripen into a long and friendly correspondence. *Dis aliter visum est.* Delta the Delightful is no more. On a visit in search of health, he reached Dumfries, a town dear to him on many accounts, and principally because there sojourned a kindred spirit—Thomas Aird—one of his oldest and fastest friends. On the evening of Thursday, the 3d of July, as the amiable and gifted twain were walking along the banks of the Nith, Delta was suddenly seized with a renewal of his complaint—peritonitis—a peculiar kind of inflammation, and it was with great difficulty that his friend could help him home to his hotel. There, fortunately, were his wife and one of his children. He was put immediately to bed, and every remedy that could promise relief was adopted. On Friday he rallied somewhat. Dr Christison was summoned from Edinburgh, and came, accompanied by the rest of Delta's family. On Saturday he grew worse, and early on Sunday morning he expired, surrounded by his dear family, and by two of his old friends, one of the Messrs Blackwood and Mr Aird. On Thursday, the 11th, he was buried in Musselburgh, where he had long officiated as a physician, universally respected and beloved. He was only fifty-three. For nearly thirty-three years he had been a popular contributor to "Blackwood's Magazine." His principal literary works are—"A Legend of Genevieve, with other Poems" (which includes the best of his poetical contributions to the magazines and annuals), "Mansie Wauch," and the "Sketches of Poetical Literature," above criticised. He published, also, several medical works of value, as well as edited the works of Mrs Hemans, and wrote the "Life of John Galt," &c.

We have spoken briefly, but sincerely, in the article, of Delta's intellectual merits; it remains only to add, that, although we never met him in private, we can testify with perfect certainty, that a better man, or a lovelier specimen of the literary character, did not exist: he had many of its merits, and none of its defects; he used literature as a "staff, not a crutch"—it was the elegant evening pastime of one vigorously occupied through the day in the work of soothing human anguish, and going about doing good. Hence he preserved to the last his child-like love of letters; hence he died without a single enemy; hence his personal friends—and they were the *élite* of Scotland—admired and loved him with emulous enthusiasm. Peace to his fine and holy dust! reposing now near that of the fine boy, whose premature fate he has sung in his "Casa Wappy"—one of the truest and tenderest little poems in the language, to parallel which, indeed, we must go back to Cowper and his verses on his Mother's Picture. In all the large sanctuary of sorrow, there is no chamber more sweetly shadowed than that in which the dear child reposes, embalmed in the double odours of parental affection and poetic genius.

Note.—Since this paper appeared, Mr Aird has collected Delta's poetry into two volumes, and prefixed to them a Life, which, in beauty of language, depth of feeling, and unity of artistic execution, has seldom been equalled.

JOHN STERLING.*

THE removal of a young man of high performance, and still higher promise, is in all circumstances melancholy. It is more so, if with the youth has expired, either a new vein of poetry, or a new view of truth; and it is scarcely less so when the youth has been unconsciously the type of a large class of cultivated and earnest minds, and when his partial successes, baffled endeavours—his admitted struggles, and his premature fate—have been in some measure *vicarious*.

These three short and simple sentences appear to us to include, positively and negatively, the essence of the late John Sterling, and shall form the leading heads in our after remarks on his genius and character. He was, in the judgment of all who knew or had carefully read him, a person of very distinguished abilities, and of still more singular promise. He did *not*, in *our* view of him, exhibit indications of original insight or of creative genius. But he has, from his peculiar circumstances, from his speculative and practical history, from his exquisitely-tuned symphonies with his age and its progressive minds, acquired a double portion of interest and importance; his experience seems that of multitudes, and in that final look of disappointed yet submissive inquiry which he casts up to heaven, he is but the foremost in a long, fluctuating, and motley file.

The external evidences of his powers and acquirements are numerous and irresistible. In his boyhood, he discovered striking tokens of a mind, keen, sensitive, and turned in the direction of those high speculations, from which his eye, till death, was never entirely diverted. While barely eight, "he distinctly remembered having speculated on points of philosophy, and especially on the idea of duty, which presented itself to him in this way—If I could save my papa and mamma from being killed, I know I should at once do it. Now, why? To be killed would be very painful, and yet I should give my own consent to being killed." The solution presented itself as "a dim awestricken feeling of unknown obligation." When about nine, "he was much struck by his master's telling him that the word *sincere* was derived from the practice of filling up flaws in furniture with wax, whence *sine cera* came to mean *pure*, not vamped up." This explanation, he said, gave him great pleasure, and abode in his memory, as having first shown him that there is a reason in words as well as in other things. When a boy, he read through the whole "Edinburgh Review," of which his biographer says, "a diet than which hardly any could yield less wholesome food for a young mind, and which could scarcely fail to puff it up with the wind of self-conceit." We doubt the validity of this *dictum*. We conceive that, to a fresh elastic mind, the crossing of such varied territories of thought, the coming in contact with so many vigorous minds, the acquiring such stores of miscellaneous information, the mere reading of such a mass of masculine English, as the perusal of the entire "Edinburgh Review" implies, must have been beneficial, and tended to awaken curiosity, to kindle ambition, to stifle mannerism of style, and, as the likely result of the many severe criticisms in which the book abounds, to allay, instead of fanning, the feeling of self-conceit. Who but commends the industry of the boy who reads all the English essayists—a course of reading certainly much more dissipating; or the youth who reads all Bayle's "Dictionary"—a course of reading much more dangerous than the "Edinburgh Review?" Let the boy *read* at his pleasure—the youth will *study*, and the man *think* and *act*.

At Cambridge, Sterling did not greatly distinguish himself, nor did he bear any violent affection to his *Alma Mater*. For

* We refer our readers to an after-paper on "Carlyle and Sterling," as modifying to some extent the views contained in this.

mathematics he had little taste; the classics he rather relished than thoroughly knew. He early commenced the study of philosophy, deeming it at once the key to a scientific theology and to a lofty literature, although latterly he all but left the cold and perilous crags of speculation for the flowery meadows of poetry and æsthetics. At the feet of Coleridge no one ever sat with a feeling of more entire and child-like submission; the house at Highgate was to him the shrine of a god, and his biographer regrets that he "did not preserve an account of Coleridge's conversations, for he was capable of representing their depth, their ever-varying hues, their sparkling lights, their oceanic ebb and flow." He began soon to empty out his teeming mind, in the forms both of verse and prose. In the course of his short life we find him connected, more or less intimately, with the following periodicals:—the "Athenæum," "Blackwood's Magazine" the "Quarterly," and the London and Westminster "Reviews." At a peculiarly dull period in the history of "Maga," he appeared, amid a flourish of trumpets, as a "new contributor," and did succeed in shooting a little new blood into her withered veins. In the "Quarterly," he wrote a paper on Tennyson, which was attributed at the time to Henry Nelson Coleridge. Differing as he did in many material points from the new school of Radicals who conducted the "Westminster," he seemed more at home in their company than in that of the knights of the Noctes; and his contributions to their journal are all characteristic. These articles have been reprinted by Dr Hare, and, along with the poems, his tragedy of "Stafford," a few letters, and other remains, constitute all his written claims to consideration.

He has certainly in them raised no very great or compact basis for future fame; but we are entitled to adduce, in addition, the testimony of his friends, who all speak with rapture of the possibilities of his mind, of his talent as a debater, and of his ready, vivid, and brilliant talk. In him alone Thomas Carlyle met his conversational match; he alone ventured to face him in single combat, and nothing like their rencontres seems to have been witnessed since those of Johnson and Burke. Even in his "Remains," we may find faint yet distinct indications of all the principal features of his intellectual character. These, we think, may be classed under the three general characteristics of *sympathy*, *sincerity*, and *culture*. We do not mean that these sum up the whole of his idiosyncrasy, but simply that they are the qualities which have struck us most forcibly in the perusal of his works. He had, besides, as a writer, a fine inventiveness, a rich and varied stock of figures, a power of arresting and fixing in permanent shapes the thinnest gossamer abstractions, and the command of a diction, remarkable more for its copiousness, flexibility, and strength, than for grace, clearness, or felicitous condensation. Perhaps his principal claim to reputation rests on his criticisms, and their power and charm lie in genial and self-forgetting *sympathy*. It is too customary to speak of this as a subordinate quality in a critic, as a veil over his eyes, and nearly inconsistent with the exercise of analytic sagacity. Those who talk in this manner are not so much guilty of a mistake as of a stupid blunder. Sympathy is closely connected with sight. It is a medium which, like water poured into a bowl, enables you to see objects previously invisible. It, and it alone, opens a window into the breast and the brain of genius, and shows the marvellous processes which are going on within. It is not merely that the heart often sees farther than the intellect, but it is that sympathy cleanses and sharpens even the intellectual eye. Love, and you will understand. Besides, the possession of powerful sympathy with intellect and genius, implies a certain similitude of mind on the part of the sympathiser. The blind cannot sympathise with descriptions of scenery, and the lively motion and music of a mountain stream sound like a satire to the lame who limp beside it. To feel *with*, you must always *find* yourself *in* the subject or the person. Adam Smith doubtless was wrong when he explained

every moral phenomenon by sympathy; it were a more probable paradox to maintain that a man's intellectual power entirely depends upon the depth, width, and warmth of his sympathies, and that Shakspere was the greatest of men, because he was the widest of sympathisers.

Waiving, at this stage of our paper, such speculations, we claim a high place for Sterling, as possessed of catholic and clear-headed sympathy. Merely to copy the names of a few of the characters whom he has analysed with justice and praised with generosity, is enough to prove this. He has painted Alexander the Great and Wickliffe, Joan of Arc and Gustavus Adolphus, Milton and Burns, Columbus and Coleridge, Simonides and Carlyle, Napier and Tennyson. We find him, too, on friendly terms at once with "Blackwood's Magazine" and the "Westminster Review;" writing in the "Quarterly," and calling Shelley a "generous heroic being;" and in his "Tales" and "Apologues" imitating the imaginative peculiarities, now of the Gothic, now of the Grecian, and now of the German school. We love this spirit much, not merely as proclaiming a warm heart, but as evincing a wide, keen, and open intellect. We contrast it favourably with a portion of the very class to whom Sterling belonged, whose fastidiousness is fast becoming frantic, who are loathing literature itself, although it is by it alone that themselves have risen, and whose hasty, splenetic, and contradictory judgments tend to exert a damping and discouraging influence upon youthful aspirants. Sterling, on the contrary, loved literature for its own sake, and had a true appreciation of its infinite worth and beauty. He was not like Byron, and one or two others we might name, who looked upon literature partly as a means for gratifying an ambition to which other avenues were closed, and partly as an outlet for the waste energy and superfluous fury of their natures, when their passions had not entirely exhausted them, and who, upon the first disappointment and chagrin, were ready to rush into another field; nor did he resemble a class who have mistaken their profession, and expended powers, which might have led them to the highest distinction, in action, in travelling, Parliament, or arms, on gaining a dubious literary success, which is despised by themselves; nor did he rank with the men whose love to literature is confined to an appreciation of those who resemble, or who follow, their peculiar style. His circumstances saved him from the miserable condition of a hack author, and from all the heartburnings, jealousies, and disgusts which degrade the noble pursuit of literature in his eyes, and turn its beautiful moon into the clouded lantern of a low, lurid, precarious life. Sterling, in his wide and trembling sympathies with literary excellence, and in his devoted enthusiasm for the varied expressions of the beautiful, as well as in the hectic heat and eagerness of his temperament, bore a striking likeness to Shelley, although possessing a better balanced nature.

While freely conceding him such qualities, we protest against some of his critical commissions, as well as omissions. We are astonished at his silence in reference to John Foster, whose sturdy genius ought to have been known to him, and whose mind was moving more slowly and uneasily through a different kind of speculative change. We cannot at all understand his admiration for Montaigne, who appears to have been a very slight sublimation of sensual indifference, and not more honest than the sensual-indifferent wealthy usually are. How grossly unjust he is to Rousseau and Hazlitt, when he calls them "declaimers and dealers in rhetorical falsehood!" Grant that Rousseau was personally a poor, scrannell, tortuous, and broken pipe, who can deny that a power, call it his genius or his demon, discoursed at times upon him sweet and powerful music, to which nations listened because they could not refrain, and which no term like rhetoric, or even oratory, nor any inferior to poetry, can at all measure? No such utterances have come from Hazlitt; but, if he resembled Rousseau in occasional bursts of vanity, he was certainly, on the whole, a

sincerer man: he egotises at his proper cost and peril. For downright honesty, and for masses of plain sense and native acuteness, we are not afraid to compare and prefer many of his essays to those of the old Gascon, and with all his faults and deficiencies, his match as a masculine and eloquent critic has yet to be made. What verbose affairs do even Jeffrey's criticisms, when collected, appear beside the lectures of Hazlitt, who often expresses the essence of an author by the dash of his pen, and settles a literary controversy by an epithet.

Initiation into the mysteries of German philosophy and literature produced, in Sterling, a considerable degree of indifference towards the English classics. To Addison's essays—those cool, clear, whispering leaves of summer, so native and so refreshing—he never alludes, and we cannot conceive him, like Burke, hushing himself to his last slumber, by hearing read the papers in the "Spectator" on the immortality of the soul. And against Dr Johnson he has committed himself in a set attack, of which we must speak more particularly. An author of celebrity maintains that no person can be a man of talent who does not admire "Dr Johnson, and that all men of eminent ability do admire him." Without pressing the application of this assertion, we do think that those who, in the present age, find in him a hero, discover both candour and penetration—candour to admit and pass by his bulky faults as a writer, and penetration to see his bulky though disguised merits as a writer and a man. For one to call him a mere "prejudiced, emphatic pedant," is simply to write down one's-self an ass. For Coleridge to call him the "overrated man of his age" (how could the age avoid rating him highly, since he was, save Burke, the greatest man it had?), is for Coleridge to prove himself a privileged person, who said whatever he chose. Sterling's charges may be classified thus:—Dr Johnson's productions are "loud and swollen"—he could say nothing of poetry, and has said nothing of Shakspere, "worth listening to"—he had no "serene joy"—and he wanted it, because he had no "capacity for the higher kinds of thought." To the proof.

First, his language was "loud and swollen." Granted. So is a torrent or a river in flood. So are Thomson's "Seasons," Young's "Night Thoughts," Schiller's "Robbers," Coleridge's "Hymn to Mont Blanc" and "Religious Musings," Sterling's "Lycian Painter" and "Last of the Giants;" all productions of genuine merit and meaning, and yet all stilted either in style or manner, or both. Johnson is often loud, but seldom *boss*—he can beat the drum, but he can shiver the castle-gate with his axe, too. If his arm be sometimes "swollen" with indolence, it is as often swollen with heavy blows, aimed, and not in vain, at the heads of his enemies. He swings in an easy-chair, which many that mock him could not *move*. You may laugh at the elephant picking up the pin, but not ejaculating *you*, brained and battered, toward the skies.

Secondly, he has said nothing of Shakspere or poetry worth listening to. What! Is his dissertation in Waller on sacred poetry, be it true or false, not worth listening to? or his panegyric on the "Paradise Lost?" or his character of the "Night Thoughts?" or his comparison between Pope and Dryden? or his picture of a poet in "Rasselas?" or his unanswered overturn of the unities in his essay on Shakspere? or several other portions of that "ponderous mass of futilities?" or his famous critical lines on Shakspere? Mark, we are not asserting that all such passages are of the highest order of philosophical criticism, but we are asserting their intrinsic value, and their immeasurable superiority to the vague, empty, pointless, misty, and pseudo-German disquisitions which stuff many of our principal magazines and reviews in the present day. We are not prepared to sacrifice the poorest passages in the "Lives of the Poets"—nay, not even his notes on Shakspere (which make Fanny Kemble swear — off the stage), for such a piece of elaborate and recondite nonsense, as, not very long ago, was permitted to appear in the "North

British Review," as a paper on Tennyson's "Princess," and was yet not the worst specimen of the kind of criticism referred to.

But Sterling accuses Johnson of wanting "serene joy;" an accusation, alas! too true. But how could he have attained this, in the first place, under the pressure of that "vile body"—that huge mass of disease, bad humours, and semi-blindness, which he carried about with him, and under which he struggled and writhed like a giant below Etna? In the victim of old, yoked consciously to a putrefying carcase, we may conceive stern submission, but hardly serene joy. We can account for a man like William Cobbett, high in health, clear in eye, and with a system answering, like the crystal mirror of a stream, to every feature of his intellectual faculties, reproaching Johnson with gloom, but must think it a sad mistake, if not an affectation, on the part of a philosophic valetudinarian like John Sterling. Besides, as it has been said that the laws of disease are as beautiful as those of health, the *intuitions of disease are as true as those of health.* In none of them is the whole truth found; but even as the jaundiced view is only a partial rendering of the creation and of man, so the view of one in perfect health and strength, with a sanguine temperament, and in circumstances of signal prosperity, is equally imperfect. The one may be called a black or yellow, the other a *white* lie. Surely the Cockney commemorated as sitting with Carlyle in a railway carriage, rubbing his hands, and saying to the grim stranger, "Successful world this, isn't it, sir?" was as far astray as the author of "Sartor" glaring through the gloomy, bile-spotted splendour of the atmosphere which usually surrounds his spirit. And whether are more trustworthy the feelings of the man standing before his fire watching the parturition of a pudding, and the simmering of a pot of mulled porter, and exclaiming, "How comfortable!" or those of a traveller perishing among the midnight snows? There is truth, and equal truth, in all such angular aspects—there is the whole truth in none of them, nor even in any conceivable mixture of them all. And it were difficult to imagine a man in temperament like Johnson forming essentially another view than what rushed in on him from every orifice of his distempered system.

There is a cant in the present day—a cant which Sterling was above—about health, healthy systems, healthy views, healthy regulation of body, as producing a healthy tone of mind, as if the soul and stomach were identical, as if good digestion were the same thing with happiness, as if all gloomy and distressing thoughts sprung from bile, as if one had only to lie down under the "wet sheet" to understand the origin of evil, to solve all the cognate, tremendous problems of the universe, and to obtain that "reconciliation" after which all earnest spirits aspire. Easy the process now for obtaining "the peace which passeth understanding!" Poor John Bunyan, why didst thou struggle, writhe, and madden, wade through hells of fire and seas of blood, to gain a result to which cold bathing and barks would have led thee in a month? Our modern utilitarians hold, that, if they had had Dante and Byron in their hands, they would have made them happy men, and writers so sweet and so practical, and can hardly credit you when you tell them that John Foster observed all the "natural laws," and was a gloomy "son of thunder," and that others break them daily, and are as merry as the day is long. It is vain to speak to them of temperament, of hereditary melancholy, of mental penetration so piercing as to amount to distemper, of visions of evil so vivid as to haunt every movement of the spirit, of hectic sensibility, of doubts so strong as to threaten to strangle piety and render devotion at times a torment—let the man but give up tobacco, and he will and must be happy! Foster evidently did not take enough of exercise, Carlyle smokes, and Cowper went to excess, it is well known, in the "cup that cheers but not inebriates." *Hinc illae lachrymae!*

Now, it is of course conceded that a

well-regulated physical life will in some measure modify both mental views and mental happiness. But, in the first place, there are constitutions for whom a well-regulated means a generous mode of living. Such was that of Shelley, who, according to the testimony of his friends, was never so well or happy as when, at rare intervals, he departed from his usual fare of vegetables and water. Secondly, "Because thou art virtuous," is there no more vice in the world, no more misery—is every dark problem solved—are the old enigmas of death and sin made one whit plainer? nay, in proportion to the degree of personal purity, is not the feeling of sorrow and disgust at the follies and foulnesses of the world likely to gain strength? We fear, the utmost that the cleanest outward life can do is to produce in some minds a feeling that they have evaded, although not met, the grand difficulty, to produce in others a selfish self-complacency and forgetfulness, springing from a state of health so unnaturally constant as to be in reality a disease, and on minds of the higher order to produce little *permanent* effect at all. From another source must help come. From above, from the regions of divine truth, must descend that baptism of fire which confers ardent hope, if not happiness—that feeling which is higher and better, even in its imperfection and chequered light, than the unthinking calm or mechanical gladness of the best regulated animalism. But Johnson, according to Sterling, wanted serene joy, not merely from the peculiarity of his temperament, nor merely from the state of his age and the degree of his culture, as affecting his impressions, but from his incapacity for the higher kinds of thought—as if all possessed of this capacity, as if Coleridge, for instance, or Schiller, or Carlyle, whom Sterling always ranks in the first class, have been serene, and as if this explanation of Johnson's want of peace were not disproved by a hundred instances of men who, less entitled than he to the praise of the highest original or inventive genius—for example, Hall, Southey, Chalmers, and the lately deceased Hamilton of Leeds—have been distinguished by buoyant and child-like felicity. No! we are persuaded that from no defect in Johnson's intellect, but from constitutional causes, sprung his morbid melancholy; nay, that the strength of his intellect was proved by the control which it exercised over his temperament. A giant maniac required and obtained a giant keeper. Had he possessed the culture and shared in the progress of our age, we are not sure if more than three or four of its literary heroes would have equalled him. Peace to his massive shade! He was one of the best, greatest, wisest, and most sincere of men.

While we are engaged in finding fault, we may notice our author's opinions on the connection between intellect and heart. Carlyle had maintained that a truly great intellect must always be accompanied by a noble moral nature; he had not asserted the converse, that a noble moral nature implies a great intellect. Sterling, in his reply, commits, we think, two mistakes. First, imagining that Carlyle had asserted this untenable converse, he presses him with the names of Newton of Olney, Thomas Scott, Calamy, Swartz, and Jeanie Deans, and asks if these were people of high intellect? But, although the day includes the hour, the hour does not include the day. Carlyle's idea is, that, while the moral nature has been found high and the intellect small, the intellect has never come to its true elevation without the correspondence of the heart. It is a question of facts. In the second place, Sterling and Carlyle attach different meanings to the word intellect. With the one it signifies the understanding, and he shows triumphantly how it has wedded wickedness or heartlessness in Tiberias, the Duke of Guise, Lord Bolingbroke, Voltaire, and Talleyrand. With Carlyle it means the higher power of intuition, genius, or reason, which, according to him, while often attended by a train of error-imps, or even big, burly vices, never exhibits profound and radical depravity, and is never unattended by a sense of the good, the true, the generous, and the just. It is obviously impos-

sible to settle a controversy where there is a preliminary misunderstanding as to the terms, but we certainly incline to Carlyle's opinion—holding it, however, only as a general rule, and noting two distinct species of exception, which we may call the mad and the monstrous case. There is, first, the *mad*, in which, as with Rousseau, and perhaps Mirabeau and Byron, a diseased organisation has divided those principles of head and heart which are usually joined in the marriage-chamber of the brain of genius. There is, secondly, the *monstrous* case, where, as in Bacon, the moral sense, if not omitted entirely, seems to exist in an inverse proportion to the intellectual power—where an intellect, vast, varied, and weighty as the globe, is balanced by a heart hard and small as a pin-point. Ought we to add Napoleon as another instance of this second most rare and appalling formation.

We mentioned, as the second general quality of Sterling, his sincerity. Those much abused and desecrated terms, truth-seeker and beauty-lover, assumed too often by the selfish and the vain to distinguish them from the common crowd, came of their own accord and rested on his head. And if he did seem toward the close to relax somewhat in his devotion to truth, and to be smit with a fonder affection for the beautiful, it was because, while the latter melted into his embrace, the former fled ever before him into her awful shades. He turned from the haughty Rosalind of truth to the fair young Juliet of beauty. But his love, in both instances, was as pure as it was ardent. You do not see in him the death-wrestle of Arnold, who, like Jacob at Peniel, appears panting as he cries to the mysterious form, "I will not let thee go except thou bless me; rather crush me by thy weight than tell me nothing." For such painful and protracted struggle, Sterling was unfitted by temperament and by illness; but, if not a rugged athlete, he was a swift runner in this great chase. His mind wrought less than Arnold's by research—more by rapid intuition. With less learning and perseverance, he had incomparably more imagination and more philosophic sagacity. Health and circumstances prevented him from effecting so much as Arnold, or leaving on the age the same impression of fearlessness, truthfulness, and moral power. More than even Arnold was he caught in the meshes of uncertainty, and to both death seemed the dawning of a light which they had yearned after, but never reached on earth. Both died too early for the world, but in time for their own happiness. It is clear that Arnold could not have remained much longer connected with the English Church. Whither the restless progress of Sterling's mind would have led him, we cannot tell, but it had conducted him to quaking and dangerous ground. Both, while in deep doubt upon many important questions, exhibited on the verge of death a child-like Christianity of spirit and language which it is delightful to contemplate; and both, through their moral likeness to each other, through their position and the progress of their thought, will, notwithstanding many mental dissimilarities, be classed together by posterity as two of the most interesting specimens of the enlightened minds of our strange transition period.

Sterling's culture was of a peculiar kind. His mind was not ripened under the scorching sun of science, but under the softer and more genial warmth of philosophy and literature. We are not sure if he had ever thoroughly mastered the original works of the German philosophers, or if his metaphysical reading was of an extensive range; we incline to think that he had acquired much of his knowledge of Kant and his brethren from the extempore versions of Coleridge, and that it was with the poets and such moral and religious writers of Germany as Schleiermacher that he was familiar. His historical knowledge was rather wide than accurate, and from severe personal research he shrunk with all the reluctance of a sensitive and nervous nature. With the classics of all polite literature he was intimately conversant. His theological attainments were respectable—there is no evidence that they were more, and latterly, indeed, he became deeply prejudiced against the present pretensions, and forms,

and modes of investigating that science. His culture, altogether, was rather elegant than strict, rather *recherché* than profound; and from this, we think, in part proceeded the uncertainty of his theological views. His clerical profession and his early feelings created an intense interest in theological subjects, and a yearning for deeper insight into them, but his tastes and his powers adapted him for a different pursuit.

A man of genius John Sterling has often been called, nor are we disposed to deny him the precious but indefinite term. His sympathies, his temperament, his mode of thinking, all the moods and tenses of his mind, were those of genius. If not a man of genius, he was a most startling likeness or bust of one. Nevertheless, we have our doubts as to the originality or greatness of his vein. We argue this not, as some would absurdly, from his wide and generous sympathies: great genius implies a great genial nature as necessarily as a great river a great channel for its waters, and a broad nature, like a broad river, must reflect many objects. We argue it not from finding no extensive or profound work in the list of his writings—this his short life and his long duel with death sufficiently explain; and still less from his non-popularity (in the popular sense) as an author; as he never spoke to the empty echo of popular applause, he never expected to receive a reply. But we imagine that we notice in the various productions he has left a sort of *tentative* process, as of a mind distracted by various models, and attempting different styles. We observe this not merely in his earlier, but in his later works. We never, from the beginning to the end of his career, find him in a path so peculiar and lonely that we cry out, "Let him prosecute this if he can till death." He never gives the impression, amid all his individual brilliances of thought, invention, and figure, of a new, and whole, and undivided thing, leaving such influence on us as is given by the sight of a new comet in the heavens, or of a Faust, a Festus, or a "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," upon the earth. His genius rather touches, dances on a brilliant and shapeless fire-mist, than constructs it into fine or terrible forms.

There are two lights in which to regard Sterling's writings—either as trials of strength or as triumphs of genius. It is in the former light that we are disposed to regard them. They are of almost every variety of style, subject, and merit. We have poems, apologues, allegories, a tragedy, criticisms, novels, and fragmentary relics. Seldom do we remember the steep of fame scaled on so many sides by one so young. He resembled a captain who, waiting for the ultimate order of his general, keeps his troops moving hither and thither in what seems aimless and endless ubiquity. So Sterling hung around all the alleys and avenues of thought, tarrying for the word "march, and secure this or that one"—a word which never came. Yet assuredly his talent, tactics, and earnestness were of no ordinary kind. How much mild pathos has he condensed into the "Sexton's Daughter!" What fine though dim condensations many of his poetical lines are! How tenderly and truly does he touch what we might deem the yet sensitive and shrinking corpse of Stafford! Napoleon, too, he has resuscitated; and it is at the touch of no earthworm that he springs aloft, gigantic, if not triumphant, from the tomb. And throughout the tales and apologues, which principally compose the second volume of his "Remains," there are sprinkled beauties of thought, sentiment, and expression, for which forty volumes of modern novels might be searched in vain.

On his "Thoughts" and "Letters," as in some respects the most interesting of his writings, we propose to pause for a little. Such writings, if from a sincere man, are always the most direct and genuine issues of his spirit—they are just the mind turned inside out. The naked man that can bear inspection must be handsome; the naked thought which delights must be beautiful and true. A very good and very clever divine has written "Adams's Private Thoughts." We are thankful to him; but what would

we give for the private thoughts of Shakspere, Milton, and especially of Burke, since he, less than most men, "hung his heart upon his sleeve for daws to peck at!" Were but some one wiser and greater than Rousseau to shrive himself as honestly as he! An honest account of his inmost sentiments and his entire history, held up in the hand of any intellectual man, not insane, would stop almost the motions of society till it had been read and pondered. Autobiographies being in general the falsest of books, the exception would be the more prized. And thus, too, we should find that one fearless man had uttered feelings and thoughts participated in by the whole human race, and was the mouth of a dumb humanity.

Sterling's "Thoughts" are evidently sincere, but as evidently a selection. They are the collected cream of his mind. He does not open his soul *ad aperturam libri*. He gives us elegant extracts, and some of them might have been better entitled, "How I ought to have thought at such and such a time." The whole collection is not so much of "thoughts," as of "after-thoughts." They were published, let us remember, before his death, in "Blackwood's Magazine." Had they been thoroughgoing utterances, such as might have been written in blood, no periodical would have printed them. As it is, many of them are very beautiful and profound. We quote a few:—

"There is no lie that many men will not believe; there is no man who does not believe many lies; and there is no man who believes only lies.

One dupe is as impossible as one twin.

To found an argument for the value of Christianity on external evidence, and not on the condition of man and the pure idea of God, is to hold up a candle before our eyes that we may better see the stars.

The religion of all Pagans indiscriminately has often been written of by zealous Christians in the worst spirit of Paine and Voltaire.

Lies are the ghosts of truths, the masks of faces.

The firm foot is that which finds firm footing. The weak falters although it be standing on a rock.

Goethe sometimes reminds us of a Titan in a court-dress.

The prose man knows nothing of poetry, but poetry knows much of him.

No man is so born a poet, but that he needs to be regenerated into a poetic artist.

There are countenances far more indecent than the naked form of the Medicean Venus.

Those who deride the name of God are the most unhappy of men, except those who make a trade of honouring him.

An unproductive truth is none. But there are products which cannot be weighed even in patent scales, nor brought to market.

There is a tendency in modern education to cover the fingers with rings, and at the same time cut the sinews at the wrist.

Better a cut finger than no knife.

The worst education which teaches self-denial is better than the best which teaches everything else, and not that."

Sterling's letters are plain, unexcited, and unpretending. Their style, so much simpler than that of his essays and tales, suggests the thought that he must have elaborated the latter. They interest more from their good sense and information, than as discoveries of character. They are full of generous and quiet criticism. Thus, of Lamb, he says:—"I have been looking over the two volumes of his letters, and I am disposed to consider them the pleasantest in the language, not excepting the best of Cowper's, nor Horace Walpole's. He was a man of true genius, though on a small scale, as a spangle may be gold as pure as a doubloon." Speaking of his own poems, he says:—"When I think of 'Christabel,' and 'Herman and Dorothea,' I feel a strong persuasion that I deserve the pillory for ever writing verses at all. The writings of Schelling, Fichte, and some others, give the same uneasy belief as to prose." Again:—"Lately I have been reading some of Alfred Tennyson's second volume, and with profound admiration of his truly lyric and idyllic genius. There seems to me to have been more epic power in Keats, that fiery, beautiful meteor; but they are two most true and great poets. When one thinks of the amount of recognition they have received, one may well bless God that poetry is in itself strength and joy, whether it be crowned by all mankind or left alone in its own magic hermitage. It is true that what

new poetry we have is little cared for; but also true that there is wonderfully little deserving any honour. Compare our present state with twenty years ago, when Wordsworth, Byron, Shelley, Keats, and Scott as a novelist, were all vigorously productive. Carlyle is the one great star that has arisen since, and he is far more prophet than singer." He gives a striking anecdote of Thorwaldsen: "Did you ever hear the story of his being at a party at Bunsen's, whose house was on the Capitolian Hill, on the site of the temple of Olympian Jove, and where the conversation, as often, under Bunsen's guidance, took a very Christian turn, till Thorwaldsen remarked, through the window commanding a noble prospect of Rome, the modern city, the planet Jupiter in great glory, and, filling his glass, exclaimed, 'Well, here's in honour of the ancient gods!'"

We mentioned at the commencement that we conceived John Sterling's progress was typical of that of a large and interesting class of intellectual persons in the present day. We proceed now to explain what we mean. It is an extremely important and serious aspect of his history at which we must now look. It is at his *religion*.

So far as religion can be called constitutional, John Sterling was constitutionally religious. The union of ardent temperament, high intellect, and pure morals, generally in this country generates a strong religious appeteney, which was manifest in him. Dr Hare has not traced so minutely and clearly as had been desirable the entire progress of his thoughts and feelings on this momentous topic. Indeed, there is throughout all his memoir a shrinking, and want of plain speaking on the subject, unworthy of such a man writing on such a man, but we think we can map it out with considerable accuracy, and in very few and very plain words. From the early piety of genius, he seems to have passed into the early scepticism of genius. While sounding on his dim and perilous way in those troubled waters, the great beacon-light of Coleridge attracted and seemed to save him. He became in theory, as he had been in feeling, a Christian. Influenced by his marriage and other circumstances, disciplined by various grave events, and not, he trusts, unguided by the Holy Spirit, he entered the work of the Christian ministry, laboured for six months with exemplary diligence, and was only prevented by illness from prosecuting the calling. Afterwards, a change began gradually to pass over his mind. Loosened from professional ties—burning with a hectic speculation—impatient of the cant, and commonplaces, and bigotry of ordinary theologians—sick of the senseless controversies of his church—and attracted ever more and more by the learning and genius of Germany, his orthodox belief in Christianity was shattered, though his child-like love for it remained the same. At last he died, it must be told, more than doubtful of the divine origin of Judaism, unsatisfied of the evidences of Christianity, and yet ravished with the unutterable beauty and moral grandeur of the latter; and his almost last words were a request to his sister to hand him the old Bible he was wont to use in Herstmonceux (where he had been curate) among the cottages.

Such is the plain unvarnished tale of Sterling's religious career. It is a very painful, very interesting, and very instructive narrative. We must be permitted to methodise our impressions of it under the following remarks:—First, it is not, alas! a singular case. Secondly, its causes are not very recondite. And, thirdly, it teaches some momentous lessons.

First, the case is not uncommon. Without alluding to innumerable private instances, the process through which Sterling was passing is almost the same with that less fully undergone by Arnold, and which, in Newman and Parker, in Carlyle and Emerson, may be considered perfected. In Shelley, it was different. In the first place, he unfortunately never enjoyed, we fear, the opportunity of seeing real religion incarnated in living examples; with that noble moral poem, sublimer far than a "Paradise Lost," a meek and humble disciple of Jesus, he seems never to have come in contact. Secondly, he was early

repelled from just views of the subject, by the savage stupidity of university tests and treatment. And, thirdly, the motion of his mind was accelerated by that morbid heat and misery which made his life an arm of Styx, and rendered his entire character and history anomalous. Shelley is the *caricature* of the unsatisfied thinker of the times; and while, as a poet, admired by all for his *potential* achievements, his creed, which creed was none, unless a feverish flush on the brow be a fixed principle of the soul, has chiefly influenced those who are weak and morbid through nature, or raw and incondite through youth. Sterling, on the other hand, was an exact picture of such a thinker.

Ere inquiring into the causes of that strange new form of scepticism which has seized so many of our higher minds, let us more distinctly enunciate what it is not, and does not spring from. It is not, as some imagine, a mere disguise which the scepticism of Hume and Voltaire has assumed, better accommodated to the tastes and the progress of the present age. It is not the same with it, even as Satan towering to the sky was the same with Satan lurking in the toad. It differs from it in many important respects. First, it admits much which the unbelief of Paine and Voltaire denied; it grants the beauty, the worth, and the utility of our religion—nay, contends that, in a sense, it is a divine emanation, the divinest ever given to man. It does not sheathe, but tosses away, the old poisoned terms imposture, fraud, priest-craft, cunningly-devised fable. Secondly, it approaches religion with a different feeling and motive. It desires to *find* its very highest claims true. It has no interest that they should be false. The life of such an one as we describe is modelled on the life of Christ; his language is steeped in the Bible vocabulary. Prayer and its cognate duties he practises, and his heart is ever ready to rise to the swells of Christian oratory and feeling, as the war-horse to the sound of the trumpet. He teaches his children to prattle of Christ, and weeps at eventide as they repeat their little hymns. He gives to the cause of the gospel, and his cheek glows at the recital of the deeds of missionaries. The sceptic of the eighteenth century first hated religion, because it scowled on his selfishness—then wished it untrue—and then, generally with the bungling haste of over-eagerness, tried to prove it untrue. Thus Paine felt the strong right hand, which, in the "Rights of Man," had coped worthily with the giant Burke, shivered to splinters when he stretched it forth, in the "Age of Reason," against the "ark of the Lord." The doubter of our day (we speak, of course, of one class) loves religion, wishes it true, reverences every pin and fringe of its tabernacle, tries to convince himself and others of its paramount and peculiar divinity, and if, at last, the shadow of a cloud continues to hang over his head, it fails to disguise the fast-flowing tears wrung from his disappointed spirit. Thirdly, it approaches religion, not only with a different feeling, but from a different direction. The sceptic of the eighteenth century approached it from the platform of matter—a platform in itself mean, even when including the whole material universe; the doubter now looks at it from the lofty ground of the ideal and the spiritual. "It contradicts the laws of matter," said the one. "I cannot, in all its parts," says the other, "reconcile it with the principles of mental truth." "It is something greater than matter," said the one. "It is something less than mind," says the other. "I cannot grasp it," said the one. "I can but too easily account for much of it," says the other. "It surpasses my standard," said the one. "It does not come up to mine," says the other. "Its miracles to me seem monstrous things which I cannot swallow," said the one. "To me," says the other, "they appear petty tricks, not impossible to, but unworthy of, a God." "Its prophecies seem to me all written after the event," said the one. "To me," says the other, "the objection is that they tell so little that is really valuable. What comparison between the fate of a thousand empires and one burst of pure truth?" "The whole thing,"

said the one, "is too supernatural and unearthly for me." "To me," says the other, "it bears but too palpable marks of an earthly though unparalleled birth —God's highest, it may be, but not his only or ultimate voice." "I wish I could convince everybody that it was an imposture," said the one. "I wish," says the other, "that I could convince myself that it is what the world professes to believe it." "It is strange," said the one, "that, superstition as it is, it won't die." "It is far stranger," says the other, "how, if it be *par excellence* true, it is dying, and has become little else than a *caput mortuum*." "But, then, it must be confessed," said the one, "that its external evidences are imposing, though not irresistible." "To me," says the other, "these seem its weakness, not its strength: and, as to its vitals—its internal evidences—is it not, like Cato, day after day, tearing them out with its own suicidal hands? is it not rapidly becoming a worldly and mechanical, if not a carnal, sensual, and devilish thing?"

Such is a fair statement of the difference between the two scepticisms. As we proceed, we shall have occasion to refute the conclusions of the second variety. We now come to its causes. First, we may name the over stress which was long laid by the defenders of Christianity upon its external evidences. The effects of this have been pernicious in various ways. It could not, in the first place, be disguised that many who defended with the most success the external evidences were, if not secret sceptics, strangers to the living influence, and disbelievers in the peculiar doctrines of the gospel. Such were Watson, Wakefield, and Paley. They first threw away the kernel of Christianity, and then did battle in defence of the empty shell. Never were walls and bulwarks, containing *nothing*, more heroically defended. The school of Warburton and Hurd, indeed, were of a more Christian class, but their polemical bitterness and personal arrogance were intolerable. Secondly, even the successful defence of the evidences seemed a poor exploit, when it was confessedly considered inadequate to impress the vital principles of Christianity upon the mind—stopping, it might be, the mouths, but not opening the hearts, of its adversaries, whom it drove away from, instead of drawing into, the city of God; and the loud cheers which followed each victory over a desperate but unconvinced foe, sounded harsh and horrible, as were one to encore the plunge of a lost spirit into the abyss. Thirdly, if external evidences were the principal, if not sole, proof of Christianity, what became of the belief of the majority of Christians, to whom these evidences were unknown, or who, at least, were quite incapable of estimating the true nature and weight of the argument founded upon them? If their belief was worthless, must not their Christianity be baseless and worthless too? If it was not, what a slur on those elaborate evidences, which in no instance could reach a result which was daily attained by thousands without any external evidence at all! Fourthly, what was the *utmost* value of external evidences? Not to produce demonstrative conviction of the truth of Christianity, but only a very high degree of probability. But is the soul, with all its eternal issues, to depend upon a question of degrees, of less and more, of a few grains above or scruples below? Is there no straighter, higher, nobler road to conviction? May there not be a voice within us, corresponding with a voice in Christianity, changing a faltering "perhaps" into a loud, confident, and commanding "it is, it must be so?" Thus felt Pascal, and this is the true history of his faith. He did not, as Cousin pretends, in order to avoid the gulf of universal scepticism, to which his thoughts and researches were leading him, and where he knew perdition weltered at the bottom, turn back and throw himself into the arms of implicit faith. No; but, dissatisfied with the common evidences of Christianity, as *demonstrative*, he leaned down and listened to the hidden river of his own spirit, as echoing the voice of inspiration, and it became to him an oracle —a proof unutterable, an argument unstateable in human terms, only to be fully

written out in soul-cypher, and to be fully read by the eye of the soul.

Pascal, we must observe, felt the utmost value of external evidence; he believed that it made the truth of Christianity highly probable—nay, probable in the *highest* degree, though the highest degree of probability is still, of course, remote from absolute mathematical certainty. But there are others who look upon the evidences *pro* and *con* as nearly balancing each other, and what for them is to turn the scale? Nay, there are some who conscientiously think that, after all Paley and Watson have written, the evidences *con* outweigh the evidences *pro;* and what can our boasted external argumentations do any more for them?

Thus his external evidence in a great measure failed of securing its object, and has by this felt failure produced in many of our present thinkers the form of scepticism we now describe and deplore. In our judgment, instead of miracles being the principal proof of Christianity, Christianity is a much stronger proof of miracles. A Book intrinsically so divine, so simple, so far superior to all others, and so adapted to the wants of human nature, cannot be imagined to be deceived or to deceive others in the relation of facts. The quantity and singularity of such facts is itself an additional circumstance in their favour. A wise imposture would have sprinkled them more sparingly and artistically, and brought down, in no case save in that of necessity, its *Deus ex machina.* The great purpose of miracles at first was to compel attention to the new system, by the glare of grandeur it threw around it—a finger of supernal light must touch the head of the bashful boy-God, and mark him out to the world; their main use now is to corroborate a belief which has been formed upon quite independent grounds. "Culture," cries Strauss, "cannot believe in miracles." Culture, however, can, and has believed in Christianity, and will not recall its belief, because she wears on her breast and forehead those mysterious ornaments which speak, not more forcibly than her whole dress and bearing, of a foreign and unearthly origin. Miracles must not be considered as splendid tricks—as mere mighty bravadoes, which whoso could not equal or explain was compelled to believe, as well as to believe whatever was said in the lecture that should follow or accompany those experiments. They were rather, in Foster's grand thought, the simple tolling of the great bell of the universe, to announce the great sermon that was to follow; and as the sermon continues after the bell has rung out, and becomes of its sound a memorial and testimony, so the marvellous words have outlived, and do testify of the marvellous works.

A second cause of our recent refined scepticism may be found in the narrow, bigoted, and unworthy notions of Christianity which prevail, in the obstinacy with which they are retained, in the fury with which they are defended, and in the contrast thus presented to the liberal and fluent motion of the general age. This is a large text, and opens up a field which we have not at present time to embrace. Religious authorship may be taken as a correct index of the general state of religious culture and progress. Now this has decidedly improved since John Foster wrote his first essays, where he so sternly characterises a large proportion of its writings, where he speaks of "one writer who seems to value religion as an assassin his dagger, and for the same reason—of another, who in all his notions is clad with sheets of lead—of a third, from whose vulgar illumination of religious themes you are excessively glad to escape into the solemn twilight of faith—and of a fourth, who represents the Deity as a dreadful king of furies, whose dominion is overshadowed by vengeance, whose music is the cries of victims, and whose glory requires to be illustrated by the ruin of his creation." For such, perhaps, we may now search our religious literature in vain; but we could point out some curious specimens still extant; here a writer, who would sacrifice all the records of creation to the arbitrary interpretation of a Hebrew particle; another, propounding the horrible doctrine, that if you are

not immersed in water you must be immersed in everlasting fire; a third, turning the Bible into a padlock on the chains of the slave; a fourth, hanging around the majestic form of Christianity a dingy finery, picked up from the cast-off clothes of second-rate poets, and sinking the mother-tongue of heaven into the sickly whine of a mendicant; a fifth, indulging, while defending religion, in the worst of human passions and language, as if rancour, and want of charity, and spleen, could be baptised and consecrated to Christ's service—as if the raven perched in Noah's ark were not a raven, a bird of foul feeding and bad omen still; a sixth, peppering bad poems with religion, to make them sell; and a seventh, talking of the fearful secrets of future punishment, as coolly as if he were not also in danger of the judgment. Add to this the deluges of commonplace, issuing in the form of religious pamphlets and periodicals of the day, and the thousand narrow and fierce controversial productions which each month spawns, and conceive of the three-piled disgust which in so many of the refined and intellectual darkens into a deeper feeling, and provokes the cry, "If this be religion, better scepticism, pantheism, atheism itself."

This, indeed, thank God, is *not* religion. But it must bear the reproach of having turned away many who otherwise would have come near and seen this great sight, and found how vast the difference between those crackling, whizzing, empty, and transient fireworks, and the low light of the wilderness, uneclipsed by the noonday ardours, clear, innocuous, but piercing as the Eye of the Inspired, kindled from, and pointing above—the bush ever burning and never consumed.

Thirdly, the divided and unhappy state of the Church must bear its full share in accounting for the evil. Alas! alas! for the divisions of Reuben, and the rents in the seamless garment of Christ. Where any real love between various parties? Where aught but hasty and ill-considered armisticcs? Where any broad, comprehensive plan of union? Where a genuine *esprit de corps* among Christian churches? Where any actual unions consummated, except in cases where the parties had come so near before, that their union lost much of its romance—where it seemed more a shaking of hands in the market-place than a marriage—and where, as at the peace of Amiens, everybody on both sides was *glad*, but nobody proud? What philosophical examination of principles, conducted by wise and impartial men, such as should precede a great scheme of permanent union, has ever been even talked of? and are even the meanest and basest of old arts of polemical depreciation and abuse altogether obsolete? It were long to trace the causes of this sad spectacle, which just amounts to—the church scarcely equal to the world, in culture, in gentlemanly feeling, in Christian charity; but such is the fact, and prodigious the mischief which is springing from it. There are other causes which might have been illustrated, such as the piece of well or ill adjusted mechanism to which the office of the ministry has been reduced—the superiority which the press has acquired over the pulpit—the political spirit which our churches of all kinds have been led to cherish—and the infection of German, and, in general, of continental modes of thought and speech. But, prominent above all, stands the enemy within the camp—the ghastly fact that Christianity has not the vital hold over men which it formerly possessed—that we are now rather haunted by its ghost than warmed by its presence—that formality, mechanism, and a thousand other evil influences, have crushed and choked it—and that its extension, however wide and rapid, will in all probability extend its evils at even a greater ratio than its advantages — propagate more tares than wheat. We unite our voice with that of Chalmers, and James, and Thomas Binney, in proclaiming this alarming state of matters. It cannot now be concealed that a great proportion of the mind of the country—of those who make our laws, who distribute our justice, whose eloquence fills our courts, whose talent informs our press, whose energy inspirits

our business, whose genius animates our higher literature, whose benevolence supports our charities, and whose beauty, taste, and accomplishments, decorate and refine our society—have travelled away from churches, and resigned faith in creeds, and that this they have done principally because the charm and the power which were wont to detain them there have departed. Were a dance of the living suddenly turned into a dance of the dead, though there remained the same splendour in the decorations, and the same lustre in the lamps, and even the same grace in the movements, would there remain the same delight in the spectators? Would not they rush forth in confusion and shrieking dismay at the sight of this ghastly mimicry of life, enacted where its pulse was beating highest, and where its stream most richly and tumultuously ran? Thus feel many to our deserted churches, deserted not of the dead but of the living, not of worshippers but of God. Pathetic the unseen Ichabod inscribed on the fallen cathedral—more pensive still the "Here God once dwelt," visible through the moonlight of meditation on the chambers of the soul in ruins; but most sorrowful of all, the sight of a large assembly of professing Christians, where all the elegance, splendour, light, decency of deportment, eloquence of speaker—where sympathetic thrill, awful shadow, heaving breasts, and bursting tears themselves, will not disguise the fact that *One* is absent, and that this place is no more "dreadful" with his presence, nor glorious with his grace.

The statements thus made must be somewhat qualified. In the first place, we must not be understood to hold that all our modern sceptics are actuated by such motives, or influenced by such causes. Many, we fear, like their brethren in times past, just "hate the light because their deeds are evil," while others are stimulated to scepticism by vanity, pride, or ignorance. There is another class still, very intelligent but very inconsistent, who, not merely doubting, but absolutely denying, all the supernaturalism of Scripture, express their respect and reverence for the writers, although, on their own showing, those writers were either fools or rogues. But the class whom Sterling typified, while sorely perplexed about the supernatural part, and even the genuineness and authenticity of many of the documents, are smit to a passion with the grandeur and heavenliness of the system, even to its peculiarities of atonement, spiritual influences, &c.

Secondly, we must not be understood to homologate the train of thought which we have ventured to put into the mouth of the Sterling-sceptic, except so far as that relates to the insufficiency of external evidence, nor to insinuate that the causes we have mentioned excuse his scepticism. Prophecy, as well as miracles, we look on as powerfully corroborative of the divinity of religion, and the fate of nations, besides, not being the sole subject of prediction, is very important when taken in connection with that system which they opposed, and which proclaimed their destruction, as well as in itself. The internal evidence of Christianity seems complete, notwithstanding the fact of a partial decline; and the genius of our religion seems absolutely to forbid its contentedly taking its place at the head of other faiths; it must be all or nothing—a devil's lie or divine. And if it does not answer to the sceptic's idea of an unique and solitary emanation from heaven, may not the blame lie not with it, but with the nature of his idea—with himself?

Thirdly, we do not wish, from these giddy heights, to "waft a lesson of despair" to any one. We are sorry for the position of such men as Sterling, but it were to be weaker than old Eli, on their account to tremble for the ark of God. The lessons we do mean to draw are as follows:—First, of charity; secondly, of warning; thirdly, of shame; and fourthly, of courage.

First, we have need of much charity at the present crisis. It will not do now to skulk from the field under a flight of nicknames. It will not do to call our opponents miscreants and monsters. There never were many in the world really deserving these names; fools only can believe that there are many now. Here,

at least, in Sterling, Arnold, Foster, we have to do with mist-severed brethren upon one great common march, with sincere lovers of mankind, with practisers of the Christian virtues, with men who diligently discharged the duties of the Christian ministry, and whose latest deathbed murmur was of Christ. While we state their doubts, let us pity the pain and sorrow, amounting almost to distraction and despair, which attended them, and let us inquire, if we have no difficulties, may it not be because we have never thought at all? and let us envy them the resolution of their doubts, to which they have now attained, we trust, in that land where the strength of light is not measured by the intensity of shade — where, amid all the constellations which may garnish that upper firmament, that of the "Balance" vibrates no more — where the inhabitants bask in spotless love, and see in perfect vision. No such charity, however, can we, or dare we, extend to those half-fledged children of impudence and conceit, or else of pride and profligacy, in whom this age abounds, who, at the finding of each new difficulty (one, perhaps, resolved for centuries), raise a noisy Eureka, as they rush out with their filthy treasure—for those who cull from such writers as Shelley the blood-red stones of his blasphemy, that they may wreath them into a necklace of ruin for themselves—nor even for those miniatures of Giant Despair, who seat themselves in we know not what "churches of doubters" or Doubting Castles, to confirm those misconceptions which they cannot or seek not to cure. The charity which would extend to such must verily be of that sort which covers a multitude of sins, and of sinners too.

Secondly, we must take up anew a voice of warning—the voice of him who saw the Apocalypse. There is coming up the church a current of doubt, deeper far and darker than ever swelled against her before — a current strong in learning, crested with genius, strenuous yet calm in progress. It seems the last grand trial of the truth of our faith. Against the battlements of Zion a motley throng have gathered themselves together. Unitarians, atheists, pantheists, doubters, open foes, secret foes, and bewildered friends of Christianity, are all in the field, although no trumpet has openly been blown, and no charge publicly sounded. There are the old desperadoes of infidelity — the last followers of Paine and Voltaire; there is the soberer and stolider Owen, and his now scanty and sleepy troop; there follow the Communists of France—a fierce but disorderly crew; the commentators of Germany come, too, with pickaxes in their hands, crying, "Raze, raze it to its foundations!" Then you see the *garde mobile*—the vicious and the vain youth of Europe; and on the outskirts of the fight hangs, cloudy and uncertain, a small but select band, whose wavering surge is surmounted by the dark and lofty crests of Carlyle and Emerson. "Their swords are a thousand"—their purposes are various; in this, however, all agree, that historical Christianity ought to go down before advancing civilisation. Sterling and some of his comates, the merciful cloud of death has removed from the fields, while others stand in deep uncertainty, looking in agony and in prayer above.

Thirdly, of shame. While thus the foeman is advancing, what is Zion about? Shame and alas! her towers are well-nigh unguarded; her watchmen have deserted their stations, and are either squabbling in her streets with each other, or have fallen fast asleep. Many are singing psalms, few are standing to their arms. Some are railing at the enemy from the safest towers. The watchman who first perceived the danger and gave the alarm, almost instantly fell back in death.

Fourthly, of confidence. Shall, then, these old and glorious battlements be trodden down? Between the activity of their foes and the supineness of their friends, must they perish? No; vain is perhaps the help of man, but we, too, will look above. We will turn our eyes to the hills whence our aid is expected. Our grand hope as to the prospects of the world and the church has long lain in the unchanged and unchangeable love of

Jesus Christ. As long as his great, tremulous, unsetting eye continues, like a star, to watch her struggles, as the eye of love the tossings of disease, we shall not fear. And whenever the time arrives for that "Bright and Morning Star" starting from his sphere to save his church, he will no longer delay his coming, whether in power or in presence. To save a city like Zion, there might fall the curtain of universal darkness. That curtain shall not fall, but there may, in lieu of it, burst the blaze of celestial light; and who can abide the day of that appearing?

PROFESSOR WILSON.

FIRST SITTING.

We are now to draw a short but sincere sketch of the wise, the witty, the warm-hearted, the eloquent Professor of Moral Philosophy in Edinburgh University—John Wilson, to his familiars; Wilson, to his foes; Professor Wilson, to his students; Christopher North, to all Europe!

We know not at what corner of this many-sided man to commence our rapid review. John Wilson is a host, he is a continent in himself. Like "Leviathan, he lies floating many a rood." Whether we view him as the copious and ardent critic, as the pathetic and most eloquent lecturer, as the poet, as the tale-writer, as the fervid politician, as the broad sunny man, we have before us one of the most remarkable, and, perhaps, the *cleverest* man of the nineteenth century. It is probable, indeed, that the very variety and versatility of Wilson's powers have done him an injury in the estimation of many. They can hardly believe that an actor, who can play so many parts, is perfect in all. Because he is, confessedly, one of the most eloquent of men, it is doubted if he can be profound; because he is a fine poet, he must be a shallow metaphysician; because he is the editor of "Blackwood," he must be an inefficient professor. There are "more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in their philosophy." There is such a thing, on this round earth, though not, perhaps, within the categories of their limited and false theories, as diffusion along with depth, as the versatile and vigorous mind of a man of genius mastering a multitude of topics, while they are blunderingly acquiring one, as a man "multiplying himself among mankind, the Proteus of their talents," and proving that the Voltarian activity of brain has been severed, in this instance, at least, from the Voltarian sneer, and the Voltarian shallowness. Such an instance as that of our illustrious professor, who is ready for every tack—who can, at one time, scorch a poetaster to a cinder, at another, cast illumination into the "dark deep holds" of a moral question, by a glance of his genius; at one time dash off the picture of a Highland glen, with the force of a Salvator, at another, lay bare the anatomy of a passion, with the precision and the power of Michael Angelo; write, now, the sweetest verse, and now the most energetic prose—now let slip, from his spirit, a single star like the "Evening cloud," and now unfurl a "Noctes" upon the wondering world—now paint Avarice till his audience are dying with laughter, and now Emulation and Sympathy till they are choked with tears—write, now, the "Elder's Deathbed," and now the "Address to a Wild Deer"—be equally at home in describing the sufferings of an orphan girl, and the undressing of a dead Quaker, by a congregation of ravens, under the brow of Helvellyn.

Professor Wilson, as a lecturer and professor, has great and peculiar merit. Inferior to Dugald Stewart, in the elegance and refinement of metaphysical criticism; to Thomas Brown, in original and daring speculation, in the combination of subtlety and beauty which distinguished that prince of Scottish philosophers; to Chalmers, in

the intensity of his mind, and the contagious fury of his manner;—he is inferior to none in the richness of his fancy, and in that singular vein of pathetic and original eloquence which gives such a charm to his spoken style. Chalmers roused; Wilson melts. Chalmers had but slender command over the sources of tears; Wilson touches them at his pleasure. Chalmers had a strong but monotonous imagination; Wilson has the rich and glowing, and fertile and forgetive fancy of a poet. Chalmers had a style of much energy but limited resources; Wilson is copious to a fault. Chalmers spoke with more rapidity —was more fluent—carried you more triumphantly away at the moment; Wilson does not strike you as so eloquent at the time, but there is a slow and solemn music in his voice, which fills at once the ear and the soul; he plants stings within you which can be plucked out only with the last bleeding fibres of the heart; his very tones linger in your ear—the very glances of his eye, years after, haunt your memory—the magic of his eloquence makes you its slave for life. Never shall we forget the manner in which he pronounced the fine words of Thomson, "the melancholy main," with deep lingering accents, as if his soul were swelling forth on the sound, while his look seemed to mirror "the great bright eye" of old Ocean. And who, that has heard him describe Cæsar weeping at the tomb of Alexander, can cease to remember the very tremor of the voice, which brought out so finely his conception of that noble scene? The tones in which he uttered the words "fading youth" will be with us to our dying day. They involved in them a world of sentiment and pathos. In recitation of poetry, he is in our judgment unrivalled. His whole man—eye, lip, chest, arms, voice—become surcharged and overflowing with the spirit of the particular composition. He reads it as the poet's own soul would wish it read. And you say, as you listen, now what an actor, and now what a preacher, would he have made. The main current, indeed, of his nature is rapt and religious. In proof of this, we have heard, that, on one occasion, he was crossing the hills from St Mary's Loch to Moffat. It was a misty morning; but, as he ascended, the mist began to break into columns before the radiant finger of the rising sun. Wilson's feelings became too excited for silence, and he began to speak, and from speaking, began to pray; and prayed, aloud and alone, for sixteen miles together, in the misty morn. We can conceive what a prayer it would be, and with what awe some passing shepherd may have heard the incarnate voice, "sounding on its dim and perilous way."*

It has often appeared to us that Wilson is somewhat damped by the imperfect sympathies of his audience. A large proportion of his general hearers is, necessarily, composed of plodding ethical inquirers, who come to get information, not to hear eloquence. Sitting, note-book and pencil in hand, fresh from Reid and Stewart, how can they relish those refined allusions in which he indulges? how can they worship that strange fire which has come from its far mountain sources, to lighten on his brow and eye? To produce his highest style of impression, he would require an audience of poets. With a sympathising and discriminating auditory, he could work wonders of excitement, move passions which Chalmers could hardly have touched, bring a glow to the brows of prepared spirits like the sunset hues of a higher heaven. As it is, his true power, as a public speaker, is not fully felt. He is, indeed, always eloquent — eloquent alike at the professorial desk, in the public meeting, amid the uproarious atmosphere of the after-dinner party, in the private circle—every motion of his spirit, everywhere, is eloquence, but, not unfrequently, it misses, by overshooting its mark, and the oratory, which might enthral angels, fails to rouse men.

Into his merits, or demerits, as a political partisan, the plan of this volume does not permit us to enter. Let us turn, rather, to glance at him in the more pleasing light of a critic. His generous judgment of the essays written by

* We state this on the authority of a friend of the Professor's.

the young men of his class must not be overlooked. His praise is not conveyed in scanty and envious driblets; it is not meted out with mean and narrow-minded parsimony; it is not confined in the conduit-pipes of set and formal phrases; it is the free outpouring of a catholic and noble nature, intensely sympathising with all excellence, and fearlessly expressing that sympathy. His blame is open; honest, as to the matter of it—gentle and measured, as to the language. The author is justified, by the experience of hundreds of students of Edinburgh University, in declaring, that a more gentlemanly, just, and honourable distributor of honours is not to be imagined; and in thanking him for the encouragement, sympathy, and praise, which he has bestowed upon numberless deserving and struggling scholars, each and all of whom regard his compliments "as equal to an house or estate."

The literature of his country is indebted to Wilson for a series of the most eloquent criticisms ever penned, from which passages of every variety of merit might be selected, in a style of execution altogether unparalleled, combining much of Macaulay's point, Hazlitt's gorgeousness, Jeffrey's vivacity, Sidney Smith's broad humour, with a freedom, force, variety, and rush of sounding words, and glow of whirling images, quite peculiar to himself. How powerful and fearless his criticisms on Moore's "Byron!" With what a trumpet tongue did he talk of Homer and his translators! With what a fine tact did he plunge us into the "witch element" of Spenser! What morsels, moreover, of rich critical dust did his prodigal genius scatter, amid the broad fun, the inextinguishable laughter, the Shaksperian imagination, of the "Noctes!" With what masterly ease and sovereign good-humour did he extinguish the author of "The Age," Henry Sewell Stokes, &c., and clip the wings, though he could not altogether arrest the flight, of Edwin Atherston! And what a fine, fresh, and frank spirit did there breathe out from his reviews of William Howitt, Ebenezer Elliott, and others of a school of politics directly opposite to his own! "Be mine," said Grey, "to read eternal novels of Marivaux and Crebillon." Give us eternal criticisms of Wilson.

His poetry is not, perhaps, his strongest claim to immortality, but there is much of it which must survive. It has not the stern and concentrated energy of Byron's verse, nor the depth and grand simplicity of Wordsworth's, nor the tumultuous glow and transcendental graces of Shelley's, nor the wild Ezekiel-like mystic energy of Coleridge's, nor the stately march and sounding eloquence of Croly's, nor the homely vigour of Crabbe's, nor the holy charm of Montgomery's, nor the robust and masculine strength of Ebenezer Elliott's. It is a poetry altogether distinct from that of any other author, living or dead. The sole spring of its inspiration is a kind of apostolic meekness or love, which overflows from his heart, as a centre, and colours all things with its own soft and fairy lustre. The result is, either a glad diffusion or a pensive melancholy. We find the former in the "Isle of Palms." Deficient as that poem is in profound purpose and overwhelming power, its beauty, like that of the child in "We are Seven," makes us glad. A fairy world surrounds us; "strange and star-bright" flowers bloom around; humming-birds flutter amid the leaves; palms, undisturbed since the deluge, are stirred to make a music over our heads; unknown stars peep down upon us through the many-coloured foliage; breezes, sweet as those which awoke from their slumbers the roses of Eden, breathe a balm upon our brows. It is the very clime and home of love:—

> "An isle under 'Atlantic' skies,
> Beautiful as the wreck of Paradise"

The whole performance is, indeed, the first dazzling leap of a fine and youthful fancy—the first sweet sin of a poetical genius; and therefore we doat upon the "Isle of Palms."

The "City of the Plague" is a more mature and elaborate production; and though it has failed in obtaining a general and giddy popularity, it is rising slowly

and surely to its level in public estimation. It does not, perhaps, come up to the ideal of a great poem in the subject. It does not equal the description of that dire calamity in Boccaccio, for picturesque interest; nor the picture of it by Defoe, in homely horror; nor the sketch of it in the "Revolt of Islam," in ideal grandeur. It does not conduct us, with a throbbing heart and trembling footsteps, from bedside to bedside of the Pest, till the minute, by multiplication, waxes into the magnificent; nor does it, on the other hand, show us, in distinct perspective, the plague-poison hanging in the air, over the "high-viced city," leaving it to imagination to tell us what is going on under that canopy of Fear. Between the two modes of painting the Pest, the poem, we think, fails. It wants the literal interest of the one, and the high and bold relief of the other. It neither gives the harrowing disgust nor the sublime moral of the evil. It has caught, however, a variety of the more pathetic and beautiful aspects of the scene, and steeped them in the rich dyes of fancy, and painted them with a tender and touching hand. We do not quarrel with the author of this exquisite poetical drama, for not combining all the qualities requisite to an ideal painter of the plague. Shakspere alone would have been this; and, had he turned his mind to the theme, would have united more than the literal distinctness of Defoe to more than the fine picturesque of Boccaccio, and more than the lofty imagination of Shelley. But our complaint of Wilson is, that he has, in some measure, given the subject the slip—painted with great beauty and pathos some scenes on the outskirts of the judgment — but neither introduced us sufficiently into the heart of its blackness of darkness, nor placed that fearful gloom in the point of view where imagination would make it visible, in its lines of dim and distant magnificence. But whatever be our opinions of the "City of the Plague," as a whole, we cannot be blind to those graces of thought, imagery, and diction, which are scattered upon it with all the profusion of conscious wealth. These, however, are chiefly of a pathetic kind. He does not once, it is singular enough, in this his most elaborate work, touch the true sublime of tragedy, although there is hardly a sketch, or review, or "Noctes" from his pen, but discovers capabilities for moving not merely pity, but terror of a very high order.

His smaller poems are many of them exquisite. Who can have forgot "An Evening in Furness Abbey," "Unimore, or a Dream of the Highlands," "Lines written in a Highland Glen?" Indeed, Wilson, like Rob Roy, is never so much himself as on the heather. The Highlands! The very name stirs his blood and intensifies his eloquence.

Next to his writings in "Blackwood," it is by his tales that Professor Wilson is chiefly known to the public; and the general opinion, in reference to them, is so fixed and favourable, that nothing remains for us but to express our cordial concurrence in it. Perhaps the "Forresters" and "Margaret Lindsay" have never had justice done to them. It were vain to deny that a certain degree of sameness and tediousness adheres to their plan; but it is the sameness of excellence, the weariness springing from a repletion of good things. And what nice little pictures and sentences are sprinkled throughout their quiet and simple tenor!—The drowning of Henry Needham has seldom been equalled.—The losing of Lucy Forrester is equally good in a different style.

And what shall we say of that series of Scottish studies, called the "Lights and Shadows?" Several of them are merely slight sketches, rough draughts thrown hastily off, as if at a single sitting. Some are pure fancy pieces, utterly unlike Scottish, or any life, and somewhat mawkish withal. Others are above praise. Witness the "Snowstorm," "Simon Gray" (an appalling story—Adam Blair in Miniature), the "Family Tryste," &c. &c. It were wasting time to criticise such things as these. As long as the thistle shakes in the Scottish breeze—and the heather, with its purple eye, looks up to the blue of the Scottish heaven—and the salmon springs in the Highland burn—and the

grey ghost-like mist gathers in the hollows of Glen Etive—and the black thunder-cloud lowers over Ben Nevis, so long shall the Scottish eye sparkle up at the Lights, and weep over the Shadows, which the hand of one of the first of living Scotchmen has so faithfully and feelingly portrayed.

The sketch would not be complete without a word on the personal appearance of its subject. In spite of De Quincey's invectives against what he calls the "missy" spirit which prompts such inquiries about a celebrated man—as, what is he like?—the feeling is natural, universal, and irresistible; and the Opium-eater has condescended for a series of years himself to gratify it. Professor Wilson's appearance is that of a hale, stout, broad-shouldered man, with a golden mass of hair, now, alas! waxing thin upon the temples, with study and sorrow. He is a man of powerful bone and muscle, above six feet high, and one whom every one stops on the street to gaze after. His brow is more ample than prominent—a broad mass of imagination on either temple. His eye is quick, stern, and lively; but, greatly as it is praised, we have seen far finer and more expressive eyes in men of much more prosaic mould. M'Nish of Glasgow says, somewhere, that he never knew a man of imagination who wanted fine eyes. He had forgot Dr Chalmers, whose eyes are peculiar but not fine. He had also forgot Sir Walter Scott. We knew a man, not inferior to either of these in native genius, whose eyes were small, piggish, and, till excited, had no expression whatever.*

Professor Wilson's eyes are certainly very characteristic of the volubility and impetuosity of his nature. They have sometimes an irresistibly comic look; at other times, they seem, like Chatterton's, "as if fire rolled under them;" and we have seen them shining through unshed tears. His dress is generally negligent, whether from carelessness or caprice we cannot tell; but certainly not from affectation, from which no human being is more free. We can add only, concerning the personality of the man, that he writes with immense rapidity, and in a fierce, rapid, unintelligible scrawl; and that his voice is the richest and deepest in its tones of any we have heard. He was some time since tried by severe domestic affliction (the loss of a beloved wife), under which his noble heart bled profusely, and in which he had the deep and universal sympathies of the public. How characteristic of him, and how affecting, was his saying to his students, in apology for not returning their essays at the usual time, "I could not see to read them in the Valley and the Shadow of Death." †

SECOND SITTING.

In our paper on Alexander Smith, we said that there was something exceedingly sweet and solemn in the emotions with which we watch the uprise of a new and true poet. And we now add, that exceedingly sad and solemn are the feelings with which we regard the downgoing and departure of a great old bard. We have analogies with which to compare the first of these events, such as the one we selected—that of the appearance of a new star in the heavens. But we have no analogy for the last, for we have never yet seen a star or sun *setting for ever*. We have seen the orb trembling at the gates of the west, and dipping reluctantly in the ocean; but we knew that he was to appear again, and take his appointed place in the firmament, and this forbade all sadness except such as is always interwoven with the feeling of the sublime. But were the nations authentically ap-

* We refer here to the late Rev. John Jameson of Methven, sketched afterwards.

† We beg leave, as supplying our brevity and lack of service, to point our readers to two papers on Wilson's poetry, which appeared in Hogg's Instructor, as the best on the subject we have read. They were written, we understand, by that strange and subtle being, the Rev. P. Landreth, Cupar-Fife.

prised that on a certain evening the sun was to go down to rise no more, what straining of eyes, and heaving of hearts, and shedding of tears, would there be!—what climbing of loftiest mountains to get the last look of his beams!—what a shriek, loud and deep, would arise when the latest ray had disappeared!—how many would, in despair and misery, share in the death of their luminary!—what a "horror of great darkness" would sink over the earth when he had departed!—and how would that horror be increased by the appearance of the fixed stars,

> "Distinct, but distant—clear, but ah, how cold!"

which in vain came forth to gild the gloom and supply the blank left by the departed king of glory! With some such emotions as are suggested by this supposition, do men witness the departure of a great genius. His immortality they may firmly believe in; but what is it to them? He has gone, they know, to other spheres, but has ceased to be a source of light, and warmth, and cheerful genial influence to theirs for ever and ever. Just as his life alone deserved the name of *life*—native, exuberant, overflowing life—so his death alone is worthy of the name—the blank, total, terrible name of death. The place of the majority of men can easily be supplied, nay, is never left empty; but his cannot be filled up in *sæcula sæculorum*. Hence men are sometimes disposed, with the ancient poets, to accuse the heavens of envy in removing the great spirit from among them. But the grief becomes profounder still when the departed great one was the last representative of a giant race—the last monarch in a dynasty of mind. Then there seem to die over again in him all his intellectual kindred; then, too, the thought arises, who is to succeed? and in the shadow of his deathbed youthful genius appears for a time dwindled into insignificance, and we would willingly pour out all the poetry of the young age as a libation on his grave.

Such emotions, at least, are crossing our minds as we contemplate the death of Christopher North, and remember that he was one of the last of those mighty men—the Coleridges, Wordsworths, Byrons, Campbells, Shelleys—who cast such a lustre on the literature and poetry of the beginning of the century. They have dropped away star by star, and not above two or three of the number continue now to glimmer: they can hardly be said to shine.

Wilson's death had been long expected, and yet it took the public by surprise. It seemed somehow strange that such a man could die. The words, "death of Professor Wilson," seemed paradoxical, so full was he of the riotous and overflowing riches of bodily and of mental being; and the exclamation "Impossible," we doubt not, escaped from the lips of many who could not think of him except as moving along in the pride of his magnificent personality—a walking world of life.

We propose, while his grave is yet green, throwing a frail chaplet upon it, in addition to our former tribute, which, we are proud to say, was not rejected or despised by the great man to whom it was paid. We mean, first, to sketch rapidly the events of his history, and then to speak of his personal appearance, his character, his genius in its native powers and aptitudes, his achievements as a critic, humorist, writer of fiction, professor, poet, and periodical writer; his relation to his age; his influence on his country; and the principal defects in his character and genius.

We may premise, that in the following outline of his life we pretend to do nothing except state a few facts concerning him which are generally known. His full story must be told by others; if, indeed, it shall ever be fully told at all.

John Wilson was born in Paisley in the year 1785. We once, indeed, heard a sapient bailie, in a speech at a Philosophical soiree in Edinburgh, call him a "native of the Modern Athens," but, although the statement was received with cheers, and although the worthy dignitary might have had sources of information peculiar to himself on the subject, we are rather

inclined to hold by the general notion that he was a Paisley *body*, with a universal soul. In Paisley they still show the house where he was born, and are justly proud of the chief among their many native poets. No town in Scotland, in proportion to its size, has produced more distinguished men than Paisley—Tannahill, Alexander Wilson, Motherwell (who spent his boyhood and youth, at least, in Paisley), and Christopher North, are only a few of its poetic sons. Wilson's father was a wealthy manufacturer in the town; his mother was a woman of great good sense and piety, and he imbibed from her a deep sense of religion. Paisley is a dull town in itself, but is surrounded by many points of interest. Near it is the hole in the canal where poor Tannahill drowned himself; farther off are the Braes of Gleniffer, commemorated in one of the same poet's songs. The river Cart—a river sung by Campbell—runs through the town, after passing through some romantic moorlands. Mearns Muir is not far away—a muir sprinkled with lochs, which Wilson has often described in his articles in "Blackwood," and on the remoter outskirts of which stands the farmhouse where Pollok was born, and whence he saw daily the view so picturesquely reproduced by him in the "Course of Time," of

"Scotland's northern battlement of hills."

All these were early and favourite haunts of Wilson, who appears to have been what is called in Scotland a "royd" boy (roistering), fond of nutting, cat-shooting, fishing, and orchard-robbing expeditions; the head of his class in the school, and the leader of every trick and mischief out of it. At an early age he was sent to the Highlands, to the care of Dr Joseph Macintyre of Glenorchy, an eminent clergyman of the Church of Scotland, who, besides multifarious labours as a minister and a farmer, found time to superintend an academy for boarders. Our worthy father knew him well, and told us some curious traits of his character. He was a pious, laborious, intelligent, and at the same time a shrewd, knowing, somewhat close-fisted old *carle*. To his care Wilson, then a loose-hanging, tall, thin, bright-eyed boy, was sent by his father, and the doctor was very kind to him. He spent his holidays in rambling among the black mountains which surround the head of Loch Lomond, sailing on the lake, conversing with the shepherds, and picking up local traditions, which, on his return to the manse, he used to repeat to the doctor with such eloquence and enthusiasm, that the old man, his eyes now filled with tears, and now swimming with laughter, said again and again, "My man, you should write story-books." Wilson told us that this advice rang in his ears till it set him to writing the "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life." So let us honour the memory of the good old Oberlin of Glenorchy, whenever we read those immortal sketches. Macintyre also (who, though an eccentric and pawky, was a truly good man) did, we believe, not a little to rivet on the poet's mind the religious advices and instructions of his mother. It was probably owing to this, too, that Wilson displays in all his writings such a respect for the clerical character, and uniformly uses the word "manse" as if it were the word *home*.

From the school at Glenorchy he was sent to the University of Glasgow, which then mustered a very admirable staff of professors, as well as a noble young race of rising students. There was (a relative of our own, by the way) Richardson, Professor of Latin, a highly accomplished scholar and elegant writer, but whose works seem now in a great measure forgotten. There was Jardine of the Logic, a man of great industry, method, communicative gift, and fatherly interest in his students; in fact, as Lord Jeffrey and many others of his eminent pupils confessed, one of the best of conceivable teachers. There was Millar, the eminent writer on the Laws of Nations. And there was Young of the Greek chair, a man of burning enthusiasm, as well as of vast erudition, whose readings and comments on Homer made his students thrill and weep by turns. Our readers will find a glowing picture of him in "Peter's

Letters." The prelections of these men must have tended mightily to develop the mind of Wilson. He was benefited, too, by intimacy with many distinguished contemporary students. There was—a little later in the classes, but still contemporaneous—Lockhart, afterwards his associate in many a fair and many a foul-foughten field of letters. There was Michael Scott, author of "Tom Cringle's Log," who became a West Indian merchant, but returned to his native city, Glasgow, and wrote those striking naval narratives, under an assumed name in "Blackwood," without being discovered, till some little allusions to early days in one of the chapters betrayed the secret to Wilson, who cried out, "Aut Michael aut Diabolus!" his old college companion standing detected. There was a man, since well known in Scotland, and assuredly a person of very rare gifts of natural eloquence and humour—Dr John Ritchie, late of Potterrow, Edinburgh—who used to contend with Wilson at leaping, football, and other athletic exercises, at which both were masters, and nearly matched. And there was Thomas Campbell, with whom Wilson passed many a joyous hour, both in Glasgow, and in frequent excursions, on their holidays, or in the summer vacation, into the near Highlands, and who, in spite of diversities of taste and of politics, continued on friendly terms with him to the last.

At college, Wilson was, we believe, distinguished, as he had been at school, by irregular diligence, and by frequent fits of idleness, by expertness, when he pleased, at his studies, and by expertness at all times in games, frolics, and queer adventures. From Glasgow, he was sent to Magdalene College, Oxford, and there his character retained and deepened all its peculiar traits. He now read and now dissipated hard, as most Oxford students of that day did. He took several college honours, and was the first boxer, leaper, cock-fighter, and runner among the students. He gained the Newdegate prize for poetry, and became in politics a Radical so flaming, that it is said he would not allow a servant to black his shoes, but might be seen—the yellow-haired, glorious savage—of a morning performing that interesting operation himself! He was contemporary with De Quincey, but they never met, at least wittingly; although we imagine the little bashful scholar must have sometimes seen, and rather shrunk from, the tall athlete, rushing like a tempest on to the yards, or parading under the arches of the old Mediæval University.

At Oxford, Wilson became acquainted with Wordsworth's poetry. It made a deep and permanent impression upon his mind. He imagined that he found in it a union of the severe grandeur of the Grecian, with the wild charm of the Romantic school of poetry. It determined his bias toward subjective instead of objective song; materially, as we think, to his disadvantage. Wilson was by nature fitted to be, as a poet, a great compound of the subjective, and the subjective with the objective somewhat preponderating, but the influence of Wordsworth, counteracted only in part by that of Scott, made the subjective predominate unduly in his verse.

When he left Oxford, he betook himself to the Lake country, where his father had purchased the estate of Elleray, situated upon the beautiful shores of Windermere; and there became speedily intimate with Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, and De Quincey. This last describes him as being then a tall, fresh, fine-looking youth, dressed like a sailor, and full of frankness, eccentricity, and fire. He was at that time vibrating between various schemes of life, all more or less singular. He was now projecting an excursion into the interior of Africa, for he had always a strong passion for travel, and now determining to be, for life, a writer of poetry. He contributed some fine letters to Coleridge's "Friend," under the signature of Mathetes. A misunderstanding, however, arose between them, and they became estranged for a season. Wordsworth's overbearing dogmatism, too, was rather much for Wilson. In truth, he felt himself somewhat overcrowed, and knew in his heart that he had no right to

be so, yet he continued to admire both these Lake Demiurgi, and became their most eloquent interpreter to the public.

While at Elleray, but considerably later than this (in the year 1810, we think), he met and married his amiable wife. His life previous to this had been a very romantic and adventurous one. We might recount a hundred floating stories about it, but were assured a little before his death, upon his own authority, that they were, in general, a "pack of lies;" so that we refrain from more than alluding to them. He was always, gipsy or no gipsy—waiter or no waiter—the gentleman, the genius, and the kindhearted, affable man. His first poem was the "Isle of Palms," which was welcomed as a very promising slip of the Lake poetic tree, and criticised with considerable favour by Jeffrey, who showed in the article a desire to wean the young bard from his favourite school of "pond-poets." In 1814 he came to reside in Edinburgh, and was called, nominally, to the bar. We are not certain, however, if he ever had a single brief, or pled a single case. But what an apparition among the lawyers of that day (who, if Carlyle may be credited, "believed in nothing in earth, heaven, hell, or under the earth") must have been this wild-eyed and broad-shouldered enthusiast, with his long flowing locks! In 1817 "Blackwood's Magazine" was started, and shortly after, Wilson, who was now dividing his time between Edinburgh and Elleray, was added to its staff, and began that wondrous series of contributions, grave and gay, satiric and serious, mad and wise, nonsensical and profound, fierce and genial, which were destined to irradiate or torment its pages for a quarter of a century. Lockhart became his principal coadjutor, and they both set themselves to write up Toryism, to write down the "Edinburgh Review," to castigate the Cockney school, and to illustrate the manners, and maintain the name among the nations of the earth, of "puir auld Scotland." The success of "Blackwood" was not, as seems now generally thought, instantaneous and dazzling; it was slow and interrupted; it had to struggle against great opposition, and many prejudices. It got into some disgraceful scrapes, particularly in the case of the melancholy circumstances that led to the death of poor John Scott—circumstances still somewhat shrouded in mystery, but which certainly reflected very little credit on either of the editors of "Ebony." "*Blackguard's* Magazine" was its sobriquet for many a long year, and not till Lockhart and MacGinn had left it for England, did the kindlier and better management of Wilson give it its high standing.

Between the starting of "Blackwood" and Wilson's election to the Moral Philosophy Chair, we remember nothing very special in his history, except his writing his first and last paper in the "Edinburgh Review," which was a brilliant article on Byron's fourth canto of "Childe Harold," and the appearance of his "City of the Plague." From this much was expected, but it rather disappointed the public. It had beautiful passages, but, as a whole, was "dull, somehow dull." It aspired to be both a great drama and a great poem —and was neither. Two or three pages of it are still remembered, but the poem itself has gone down, or, rather, never rose.

Galled at its reception, the author mentally resolved, and he kept his resolution, to publish no more separate poems. In 1820 Dr Thomas Brown died, and Wilson was urged by his friends, especially by Sir Walter Scott, to stand a candidate for the vacant chair of Moral Philosophy. It was desirable, they thought, that that should be filled by one who was a Conservative (Wilson had long ago renounced his Radicalism), and who had genius and mettle besides. It was thought good, too, that such a man should now have a settled position in society. His pretensions were fiercely opposed. When a boy, we fell in with a file of old "Scotsmans," dated 1820, and assure our readers that they could scarcely credit the terms in which Wilson was then assailed. He was accused of blasphemy, of writing indecent parodies on the Psalms, of being a turncoat, of having no original genius, of having written a bad bombastic paper

in the "Edinburgh Review," &c. &c. The fact was, party spirit was at that time running mountains high in Scotland, fomented greatly by the Queen's case. Wilson, besides, was as yet very little known; his poetry was not popular; his powers as a periodical writer were yet in blossom, and only his early eccentricities seemed to mark him out from the roll of common men. His opponent, Sir William Hamilton, too, was known to have devoted immense talent and research to the study of moral and mental science, while Wilson, it was shrewdly suspected, required to *cram* himself for the office. Through dint of party influence, however, he was elected; and certainly none of the numerous clan of *Job-sons* has ever done more to redeem the character of the tribe. He cast a lustre even upon the mean and rotten ladder by which he had risen.

Scott had told Wilson (see "Scott's Life"), that when elected to the chair he must "forswear sack, purge, and live cleanly like a gentleman." And on this hint he proceeded to act. He commenced to prepare his lectures with great care; and his success in the chair was such as to abash his adversaries, and astonish even his friends. He became the darling of his students; and the publication of his "Lights and Shadows," and the "Trials of Margaret Lindsay," contributed to raise his reputation, not only as a writer, but as a man.

He continued still to write in "Blackwood," and when Lockhart, in 1826, went to London to edit the "Quarterly Review," Wilson became the unrestricted lord, although not the ostensible editor, of that magazine, with the history of which for ten years he was identified. How the public did, in these days, watch and weary for each First of the Month! for sure it was to bring with it either a sunny and splendid morning of poetic eloquence, or a terrible and sublime tornado of invective and satiric power. "Who is next," was the general question, "to be crowned as by the hand of Apollo, or to be scorched as by a wafture from the torch of the Furies!" The "Noctes Ambrosianæ" especially intoxicated the world. They resembled the marvels of genius, of the stage, and of ventriloquism united to produce one bewitching and bewildering whole. The author seemed a diffused Shakspere, or Shakspere in a hurry, and with a printer's "devil" waiting at his door. Falstaff was for a season eclipsed by the "Shepherd," and Mercutio and Hamlet together had their glories darkened by the blended wit and wisdom, pathos and fancy, of Christopher North. The power of these dialogues lay in the admirable combination, interchange, and harmonious play of the most numerous, diverse, and contradictory elements and characters. Passages of the richest and most poetical eloquence were intermixed with philosophical discussion, with political invectives, with literary criticism, with uproarious fun and nonsense, with the floating gossip of the day, and with the sharpest of small talk. The Tragedy, the Comedy, and the Farce were all there, and the farce was no *after-piece*, but intermingled with the entire body of the play. The author interrupts a description of Glencoe or Ben Nevis, to cry out for an additional sausage, and breaks away from a discussion on the origin of evil, to compound a tumbler of toddy. While De Quincey is explaining Kant's "Practical Reason," the Shepherd is grunting "Glorious" over a plate of hotch-potch; and from under North, who is painting a Covenanting martyrdom, Tickler suddenly withdraws the chair, and the description falls with the old man below the table. Each dialogue jerks you down at every point from the highest to the lowest reaches of feeling and thought; and drives remorselessly through its own finest passages, in order to secure the effects of a burlesque oddity, compounded of the grave and the ludicrous, the lofty and the low. Each number in the series may be compared to a witch's caldron, crowded and heaving with all strange substances, the very order of which is disorganisation, but with the wierd light of imagination glimmering over the chaos, and giving it a sort of unearthly unity. Verily, they are Walpurgis Nights, these "Noctes Ambrosianæ." The English language con-

tains nothing so grotesque as some of their ludicrous descriptions, nothing so graphic, so intense, so terrible, as some of their serious pictures; no dialogue more elastic, no criticism more subtle, no gossip more delightful, no such fine diffusion, like the broad eagle wing, and no such vigorous compression, like the keen eagle talon; but when we remember, besides, that the "Noctes" contain *all* these merits combined into a wild and wondrous whole, our admiration of the powers displayed in them is intensified to astonishment, and if not to the pitch of saying, "Surely a greater than Shakspere is here," certainly to that of admitting a mind of cognate and scarce inferior genius.

Thus, for ten years did Wilson continue, in "Noctes," in reviews, in pictures of Scottish scenery and life, in criticisms on Homer, and Spenser, and the other great poets of the world, with undiminished freshness and force, to disport his leviathan powers. Sport, indeed, it was, for he seldom, it is said, employed more than three or four days in the month in the preparation of his articles. When Magazine-day approached, his form ceased to be seen on Prince's Street, except at the stated hour when he walked to his class. He shut himself up, and poured out his brilliant extemporisations, page after page, as fast as his broad quill could move, till perhaps the half of a "Maga" is written, and for another month the lion is free. In this improvisatore fashion, it is said, he wrote his Essay on Burns within a single week. Such irregular Titanic work, however, brought its penalties along with it, and he began by and by to "weary in the greatness of his way." His gentle wife was removed, too, about this time by death from his side, and the shock was terrible. It struck him to the ground. It unstrung a man who seemed before to possess the Nemean lion's nerve. He was found at this time, by a gentleman who visited him at Lasswade, feeble, almost fatuous, miserable, and unable to do aught but weep and moan, like a heart-broken child. But the end was not yet. He recovered by a mighty bound his elasticity of mind and energy of frame. He carried on his professional labours with renewed vigour and success. He bent again the Ulysses bow of "Blackwood," but never, it must be admitted, with the same power. His "Dies Boreales," compared to the "Noctes Ambrosianæ," were but as the days of Shetland in January, compared to the nights of Italy or of Greece in June.

We may here appropriately introduce the reminiscences of our own intercourse with him, which indeed was very slight and occasional. We had often gone in to hear him in his class, although our curriculum of study had taken place in another university; had not been fascinated at first, but had ultimately learned enthusiastically to admire his manner of teaching—of which more afterwards. In 1834, anxious to gain a verdict from a critic so distinguished, we ventured on an experiment, at the recollection of which we yet blush. We sent him in some Essays, professing to be by another. The result was of a sort we had not in our wildest dreams imagined. Suffice it that he spoke of them (without knowing their author) in a manner which not only bound us to him for life, but cheered and encouraged us mightily at that early stage of our progress. When, years afterwards, the papers of the "First Gallery" appeared *seriatim* in the "Dumfries Herald," Wilson was no niggard encomiast, and it was greatly owing to his kindly words that we were induced to collect them into a volume. To himself, however, we had all this while never spoken, except for a few minutes in his class-room, till we called on him in 1844, along with a friend. At first the servant was rather shy, and spoke dubiously of the visibility of the professor, but, upon our sending up our names, we heard him on the top of the stairs growling out a hearty command to admit us. In a little he appeared, and such an apparition! Conceive the tall, strong, salvage-looking man, with a beard wearing a week's growth, his hair half a twelvemonth's, no waistcoat, no coat, a loose cloak flung on for the nonce, a shirt dirty, and which apparently had been dirty for days, and, to crown all, a huge cudgel in

his hand. He saluted us with his usual dignified frankness, for in his undress of manner as well as of costume he was always himself; and, after asking us both to sit, and sitting down himself, he commenced instantly to converse on the subject nearest to him at the moment. He had been recently up at Loch Awe, for he loved, he said, to "see the spring come out in the Highlands." He had, besides, been visiting many of his old acquaintances there, "shepherds and parish ministers;" and then he enlarged on the character of his old friend Dr Macintyre. There was a full-length picture of Wilson when a boy on one side of the room, representing him as standing beside a favourite horse, and, sooth to say, somewhat "shauchly" he seemed in his juvenile form. The picture, he said, had been taken at the especial desire of his mother, and the terms in which he spoke of her were honourable to both parties. He then launched out on literary topics in his usual free but fiery style. He spoke a great deal about De Quincey, and with profound admiration. To Coleridge as a man, his feelings were less cordial. Altogether, we left deeply impressed with his affability and kindliness, as well as with his great mental powers.

We met him but once more, at Stirling, on occasion of a great literary *conversazione* held in that town, on the 10th January, 1849. His coming there had been announced, but was expected by no one, as it was during the session of college. Thither, however, he came, like a splendid meteor, and was received with boundless enthusiasm. We remember, while walking along with him from dinner to the place of meeting, that some one remarked how singular it was (fact), "that Cholera and Christopher North had entered Stirling the same day." "And I the author of the 'City of the Plague,' too," was his prompt rejoinder. Never had there been such a night in Stirling, nor is there ever likely to be another such. His spirits rose, he threw his soul amidst his audience, like a strong swimmer in a full-lipped sea, touched by turns their every passion, and at last, by the simple words, rendered more powerful by the proximity of the spot, "one bloody summer-day at Bannockburn," raised them all to their feet in one storm of uncontrollable enthusiasm. More elaborate prelections from his lips we have heard, but never anything better calculated to move and melt, to thrill and carry away, and that, too, without an atom of claptrap, a popular assembly.

We have, in common with many, seen and heard him in various other of his moods. We have seen him in the street, or in the Parliament House, or in the Exhibition, surrounded three deep by acquaintances, male and female, whom he was keeping in a roar of laughter, or sometimes hushing into a little eddy of silence, which seemed startling amidst the torrent of noisy life which was rushing around. We have watched him followed at noonday through long streets by enthusiasts and strangers, who hung upon his steps, and did "far off his skirts adore," and have seen him *monstrari digito*, a thousand times; sometimes we have thus followed, and thus pointed him out ourselves. And we have heard him again and again in the Assembly Rooms, and in his own classroom, addressing audiences, whom he melted, electrified, subdued, exploded into mirth, or awed into solemnity, at his pleasure, while he was discovering the secret springs of beauty and sublimity, of delight and of terror, of laughter and of tears.

In 1852 he saw the necessity of resigning his chair, owing to the increasing weakness of his frame. A pension of £200 was granted him by Lord John Russell. About a year ago symptoms of decay in his mental faculties are said to have been observed. From his cottage in Lasswade he was removed to Edinburgh, and after various fluctuations, his spirit was at last mercifully released from that body which had become a "body of death," at twelve on the morning of Monday the 3d April.

We come now to the second part of our task—to speak of him critically as a Man and an Author. And in looking to him as a Man, we are compelled, first, to

think of that magnificent presence of his to which we have alluded often, and may allude yet again, which ever haunts us, and all who have seen it. In the case of many, the body seems to belong to the mind; in the case of Wilson, the mind seemed to belong to the body. You were almost tempted to believe in materialism, as you saw him, so intensely did the body seem alive, so much did it appear to ray out meaning, motion, and power, from the crown of the head to the sole of the foot. You thought, at other times, of the first Adam—the stately man of red clay, rising from the hand of the Almighty Potter. Larger and taller men we have seen, figures more artistically framed we have seen, faces more chastely chiselled, and "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought," are not uncommon; but the power and peculiarity of Wilson's body lay in the combination of all those qualities which go to form a model man. There was his stature, about six feet two inches. There were his erect port and stately tread. There was his broad and brawny chest. There was a brow—lofty, round, and broad. There were his eyes, literally flames of fire, when roused. There were a nose, mouth, and chin, expressing, by turns, firmest determination, exquisite feeling, humour of the drollest sort, and fiery rage. And flowing round his temples, but not "beneath his shoulders broad," were locks of the true Celtic yellow, reminding you of the mane worn by the ancient bison in the Deu-Caledonian forests. "You are a man," said Napoleon, when he first saw Goethe. Similar exclamations were often uttered by strangers, as they unexpectedly encountered Wilson in the streets. Johnson said of Burke, that you could not converse with him for five minutes under a shed without saying "this is an extraordinary man;" but Burke had to open his mouth; his presence was by no means remarkable. In Wilson's case there was no need for uttering a single word; his face, his eye, his port, his chest, all united in silently shining out the tidings of what he was—the most gifted, and one of the least cultured, of the sons of men.

"Cultured," we mean, in the ordinary sense of that word, for unquestionably he had received or given himself an education as extraordinary as was his genius. Yet there was a want of polish and finish about his look, his hair, his dress, and gesture, that seemed outré and savage, and which made some hypercritics talk of him as a splendid beast—a cross between the man, the eagle, and the lion. You saw at least one who had been much among the woods, and much among the wild beasts, who, like Peter Bell, had often

> "Set his face against the sky,
> On mountains and on lonely moors;"

who had slept for nights among the heather, who had bathed in midnight lakes, and shouted from the top of midnight hills, and robbed eagles' eyries, and made snow-men, and wooed solitude as a bride; and yet, withal, there was something in his bearing which showed the scholar, the gentleman, the man of the world, and the waggish observer; and if one presumed on his oddity, and sought to treat him as a simpleton, or semi-maniac, he could resent the presumption by throwing at him a word which withered him to the bone, or darting at him a glance which shrivelled him up into remorse and insignificance. His eye was indeed a most singular eye. Now it glittered like a sharp sunlit sword; now it assumed a dewy expression of the slyest humour; now it swam in tears; now it became dim and deep under some vision of grandeur which had come across it; now it seemed searching every heart among his hearers; and now it appeared to retire and communicate directly with his own. And wo to those against whom it did rouse in anger! It was then Cœur-de-Leon in the "Talisman," with his hand and foot advanced to defend the insulted banner of England.

Indeed, we marvel that no critic hitherto has noticed the striking similitude between Wilson and Scott's portraiture of Richard the Lion-hearted. We are almost inclined to think that Sir Walter had him in his eye. Many of their qua-

lities were the same. The same leonine courage and nobility of nature; the same fierce and ungovernable passions; the same high and generous temper; the same love of adventure and frolic; the same taste for bouts of pleasure and lowly society; the same love of song and music; the same imprudence and improvidence; the same power of concentrating the passions of hot hearts upon their wives; and the same personal appearance to the very letter—in complexion, strength, and stature—distinguish the King and the Poet. Neither Richard nor Christopher was always a hero. The former enjoyed the humours of Friar Tuck as heartily as he did the minstrelsy of Blondel; and our lion-hearted Laker could be as much at home among peasants and smugglers, as he ever was with Wordsworth and Coleridge.

We have often heard Americans preferring the personal presence of Daniel Webster to that of Wilson. Webster we never saw, but, from descriptions and portraits, we have him somewhat clearly before our mind's eye. He was in appearance a tall, solemn, swarthy, thundrous-looking Puritan clergyman, clad always in black, not unlike James Grahame of the "Sabbath," Wilson's friend, but with a prodigiously more powerful expression on the eye and brow. He looked, in short, morally the very reverse of what he *was;* he seemed the model of a high-principled and conscientious man. Wilson's face and form were equally massive, far sunnier and far truer to his genial and unlimited nature.

As a man, Wilson was much misunderstood. Not only were his personal habits grossly misrepresented, but his whole nature was belied. He was set down by many as a strange compound of wilful oddity, boisterous spirits, swaggering ostentation, and true genius. Let us hear, on the other side, one who knew him intimately, and loved him as a son a father—our friend Thomas Aird. His words, written since Wilson's decease, are identical with all his private statements to us on the same subject:—"He was singularly modest, and even deferential. His estimates of life were severely practical; he was not sanguine; he was not even hopeful enough. Those who approached the author of the 'Noctes' in domestic life, expecting exchanges of boisterous glee, soon found out their mistake. No writing for mere money, no 'dabbling in the pettiness of fame,' with this great spirit, in its own negligent grandeur, modest, quiet, negligent, because, amidst all the beauty and joy of the world, it stood *waiting and wondering on vaster shores than lie by the seas of time.*"

These words are not only beautiful, but true, although they represent Wilson only in his higher moods. He could, and often did, indulge in boisterous glee, while, like many humorists, his heart within was serious, if not sad enough. And this leads us to the question as to his faith—what was it? He was unquestionably of a deeply religious temperament; but he had not given it a proper culture. He was not, we think, satisfied with any of the present *forms* of the Christian religion; yet there was something in him far beyond nature-worship. His attitude, indeed, was just that described by Aird. Like the spirits of Foster, Coleridge, Arnold, and many others in our strange era, while accepting Christianity as a whole, Wilson's spirit was "waiting and wondering" till the mighty veil should drop, and show all mysteries made plain in the light of another sphere. Had he more resolutely lived the Christian life in its energetic activities, and approved himself more a servant of duty, his views had perhaps become clearer and more consoling. And yet, what can we say? Arnold was a high heroic worker, nay, a humble, devoted Christian, and yet died with a heart broken by the uncertainties of this transition and twilight age.

Many thought, and called, Wilson a careless, neglectful man. He was not, indeed, so punctual as the Iron Duke in answering letters, nor could he be always "fashed" with young aspirants. But this arose more from indolence than from indifference. He was to many men a generous and constant friend and patron. Few have had encouraging letters from him, but many have had cheering words, and

a word from him went as far as a letter, or many letters, from others.

We pass to speak of the constituents of his genius. These were distinguished by their prodigal abundance and variety. He was what the Germans call an "all-sided man." He had, contrary to common opinion, much metaphysical subtlety, which had not indeed been subjected, any more than some of his other faculties, to careful cultivation. But none can read some of his articles, or could have listened to many of his lectures, without the conviction that the metaphysical power was strong within him. Of his imagination we need not speak. It was large, rich, ungovernable, fond alike of the Beautiful and the Sublime, of the Pathetic and the Terrible. His wit was less remarkable than his humour, which was one of the most lavish and piquant of his faculties. Add to this, great memory, keen, sharp intellect, wide sympathies, strong passion, and a boundless command of a somewhat loose, but musical and energetic diction, and you have the outline of his gifts and endowments. He was deficient only in that plodding, painstaking sagacity which enables many commonplace men to excel in the physical sciences. If he ever crossed the "Ass's Bridge," it must have been at a flying leap, and with recalcitrating heels, and he was much better acquainted, we suspect, with the "Fluxions" of the Tweed, than with those of Leibnitz and Newton.

His powers have never, we think, found an adequate development. It is only the bust of Wilson we have before us. Yet let us not, because he has not done mightier things, call his achievements small; they are not only very considerable in themselves, but of a very diversified character. He was a critic, humorist, writer of fiction, professor, poet, and periodical writer. And, first, as a critic, criticism with him was not an art or an attainment: it was an insight and an enthusiasm. He loved everything that was beautiful in literature, and abhorred all that was false and affected, and pitied all that was weak and dull; and his criticism was just the frank, fearless, and eloquent expression of that love, that abhorrence, and that pity. Hence his was a catholic criticism; hence his canons were not artificial; hence he abhorred the formal, the mystical, and the pseudo-philosophic schools of criticism; hence the reasons he gave for his verdicts were drawn, not from arbitrary rules, but directly from the great principles of human nature. With what joyous gusto did he approach a favourite author! His praise fell on books like autumn sunshine, and whatever it touched it gilded and glorified. And when, on the other hand, he was disgusted or offended, with what vehement sincerity, with what a noble rage, with what withering sarcasm, or with what tumultuous invective, did he express his wrath. His criticisms are sometimes rambling, sometimes rhapsodical, sometimes overdone in praise or in blame; often you are compelled to differ from his opinions, and sometimes to doubt if they are fully formed in his own mind, and in polish, precision, and depth, they are inferior to a few others; but in heartiness, eloquence, variety, consummate ease of motion, native insight, and sincerity, they stand alone.

We have alluded to his extraordinary gift of humour. It was not masked and subtle, like Lamb's; it was broad, rich, bordering on farce, and strongly impregnated with imagination. It was this last characteristic which gave it its peculiar power, as Patrick Robertson can testify. This gentleman possesses nearly as much fun as Wilson, but in their conversational contests Wilson, whenever he lifted up the daring wing of imagination, left him floundering far behind.

Good old Dr Macintyre, we have seen, thought Wilson's *forte* was fiction. We can hardly concur with the doctor in this opinion, for, although many of his tales are fine, they are so principally from the poetry of the descriptions which are sprinkled through them. He does not tell a story well, and this because he is not calm enough. As Cowper says, he prefers John Newton, as a historian, to Gibbon and Robertson; because, while they *sing*, you *say* your story; and history is a thing to be said, not sung. Before we met this remark, we had *made* it in

reference to Wilson and Scott. Scott *says* his stories, and Wilson *sings* them. Hence, while Wilson in passages is equal to Scott, as a whole, his works of fiction are greatly less interesting, and seem less natural. Wilson is a northern Scald, not so much narrating as pouring out passionate poetic rhapsodies, thinly threaded with incident; Scott is a Minstrel of the border, who can be poetical when he pleases, but who lays more stress upon the general interest of the tale he tells. Even in description he is not, in general, equal to Scott, and that for a similar reason. Wilson, when describing, rises out of the sphere of prose into a kind of poetic rhythm; Scott never goes beyond the line which separates the style of lofty prose from that of absolute poetry. Wilson is too Ossianic in his style of narration and description; and had he attempted a novel in three or four volumes, it had been absolutely illegible. Even "Margaret Lindsay," his longest tale, rather tires before the close, through its sameness of eloquence and monotony of pathos; only very short letters should be *all* written in tears and blood. And his alternations of gay and grave are not so well managed in his tales as in his "Noctes." Yet nothing can be finer than some of his individual scenes and pictures. Who has forgotten his Scottish Sunset, which seems dipped in fiery gold, or that Rainbow which bridges over one of his most pathetic stories, or the drowning of Henry Needham, or the Elder's Deathbed, or that incomparable Thunderstorm, which seems still to bow its giant wing of gloom over Ben Nevis and the glen below? In no modern, not even Scott, do we find prose passages so gorgeous, so filled with the intensest spirit of poetry, and rising so finely into its language and rhythm as these.

We have of late frequently applied, to apparently fine prose writing, the test of reading it aloud, and have judged accordingly of its rhythm, as well as of its earnestness and power. Few authors, indeed, can stand this. M'All of Manchester's high-wrought paragraphs seem miserably verbose and empty when read aloud; Hamilton of Leeds' sentences are too short and disjointed to stand this test; and even Ruskin's most sounding and laboured passages assume an aspect of splendid disease, of forced and factitious enthusiasm, when thus tried. All the better passages, on the other hand, of Hall, Chalmers, Foster, Scott, Croly, De Quincey, and, we add, of Macaulay, triumphantly pass the ordeal; and so, too, the descriptions in the "Lights and Shadows of Scottish Life."

"Come back into memory, thou most brillant and genial of all professors, as we have seen thee in the days of other years!" We enter the class-room, and take, we shall suppose, the most remote seat in the sloping array of benches. We find ourselves surrounded by youths of all varieties of appearance and diversities of standing, waiting, some eagerly, others with an air of perfect indifference, for the entrance of the professor. Yonder two are discussing the question, whether Wilson be a real Christian, or a true poet. One is preparing his pencil for making a caricature of his illustrious teacher; and another is mending his pen for the purpose of taking down notes of the lecture. A few are knocking their heels against the ground, because the morning is cold, and, perhaps, in a loud whisper discussing the merits of the leading "star" in the Royal Theatre, where they had been over-night. Here and there you see strangers—some enthusiastic youths from England, or some clerical-looking gentlemen from the North of Scotland—whose fidgetty air tells you that they are wearying for the appearance of the lion, and who seem regarding his class with feelings of unmixed contempt. At last you hear a certain bustle, and immediately after, there comes rushing along from the left-hand side a tall, yellow-haired man, in a gown, who steps up to the platform, and turns toward you, eyes, a brow, a cheek, a chin, a chest, and a port, which instantly stamp him a Titan among the children of men. His hair rolls down his temples like a cataract of gold; his eyes are light-blue, sparkling, and at times so fierce, that they seem two loopholes opening into a brain of fire; his cheek is flushed by exercise and air into a

rich manly red; his chin is cut like that of a marble Antinous; his chest is broad and ample, and seems ready either as a bulwark to break, or as a floodgate to let forth strong emotion; his lips are firmly set, yet mild; the aspect of the lower face is that of health and peace, the aspect of the upper is that of high, rapt enthusiasm, like that of Apollo looking up after the path of one of his sunny arrows; the port is erect, yet not haughty—high, yet not overbearing or contemptuous—and, ere he has opened his lips, you say internally, "I have found a man of the old heroic breed, strength, and stature." He begins his lecture. For a little you are disappointed. His voice is deep, but seems monotonous; his utterance is slow; his pronunciation is peculiar; his gesture uncouth; what he says, is a rather confused and embarrassed repetition of a past lecture; and you are resigning yourself to a mere passive and wondering gaze at the *personnel* of the man, expecting nothing from his mouth, when the progress of his discussion compels him to quote a few lines of poetry, and then his enthusiasm appears, not rapidly bursting, but slowly defiling like a great army into view, his eye kindles, enlarges, and seems to embrace the whole of his audience in one glance, his chest heaves, his arms vibrate, sometimes his clenched hand smites the desk before him, and his tones deepen and deepen down into abysses of pathos and melody, as if searching for the very soul of sound, to bring it into upper air. And, after thus having arrested you, he never for an instant loses his grasp, but, by successive shock after shock of electric power, roll after roll of slow thunder, he does with you what he wills, as with his own, and leaves you in precisely the state in which you feel yourself when awakening from some deep, delightful dream. He had, besides, certain great field-days, as a lecturer, in which, from beginning to end, he spoke with sustained and accelerating power: as when he advocated the Immortality of the Soul; described the sufferings of Indian prisoners; explained his ideas of the Beautiful; or described the character of the Miser. The initiated among the students used to watch and weary for these grand occasions, and all who heard him then felt that genius and eloquence could go no further, and that they were standing beside him on the pinnacle of intellectual power.

His poetry proper has been generally thought inferior to his prose, and beneath the level of his powers. Yet, if we admire it less, we at times love it more. It is not great, or intense, or highly impassioned, but it is true, tender, and pastoral. It has been well called the "poetry of peace;" it is from "towns and toils remote." In it the author seems to be exiled from the bustle and conflict of the world, and to inhabit a country of his own, not an entirely "Happy Valley," for tears there fall, and clouds gather, and hearts break, and death enters, but the tears are quiet, the clouds are windless, the hearts break in silence, and the awful Shadow comes in softly, and on tiptoe departs. Sometimes, indeed, the solitude and silence are disturbed by the apparition of a "wild deer," and the poet is surprised into momentary rapture, and a stormy lyric is flung abroad on the winds. But, in general, the region is calm, and the very sounds are all in unison and league with silence. As a poet, however, Wilson was deficient, far more than as a prose writer, in objective interest, as well as in concentration of purpose. His poetry has neither that reflective depth which causes you to recur so frequently to the poetry of Wordsworth, nor that dazzling lightness and brilliance of movement which fascinate you in Scott. It is far, too, from being a full reflection of his multifarious and powerful nature; it represents only a little quiet nook in his heart, a small sweet vein in his genius. It does not discover him as he is, but as he would wish to have been. His poetry is the Sabbath of his soul. And there are moods of mind—quiet, peaceful, autumnal moments—in which you enjoy it better than the poetry of any one else, and find a metaphor for its calm and holy charm in the words of Coleridge:—

> "The moonbeams *steep'd in silentness*,
> The *steady weather-cock*."

The revolving, impatient wheel, the boundless versatility of Wilson's genius, quieted and at rest, as we see it in his poetry, could not be better represented than in these lines.

In his periodical-writings alone do we find anything like an adequate display of his varied powers. You saw only the half-man in the professor's chair, and only the quarter-man in his poetry; but in the "Noctes" and the satirico-serious papers he scattered over "Blackwood," you saw the whole Wilson—the Cyclops now at play, and now manufacturing thunderbolts for Jove; now cachinnating in his cave, now throwing rocks and mountains at his enemies, and now pouring out awful complaints, and asking strange, yet reverent queries in the ear of the gods.

Wilson's relation to his age has been, like Byron's, somewhat uncertain and vacillating. He has been, on the whole, a "lost leader." He has, properly speaking, belonged neither to the old nor new, neither to the conservative nor to the movement, neither to the infidel nor the evangelical sides. Indeed, our grand quarrel with him is, that he was not sufficiently in earnest; that he did not with his might what his hand found to do; that he hid his *ten* talents in a napkin; that he trifled with his inestimable powers, and had not a sufficiently strong sense of stewardship on his conscience. Splendid passages and inestimable thoughts, of course, abound in all that Wilson wrote, but the want of pervasive purpose, of genuine artistic instinct, of condensation, and of finish, has denied true unity, and perhaps permanent power, to his writings. He will probably be best remembered for his "Lights and Shadows"—a book which, although not a full discovery of his powers, lies in portable compass, and embalms that fine nationality which so peculiarly distinguished his genius. Professor Ferrier is about to publish a collection of his "Noctes," which will, we think, be a very popular book.

Wilson had every inducement to have done more than he did. He was a strong, healthy nature; he had much leisure; he had great, perhaps too great, facility of expression. He was the pet of the public for many years. But he did not, alas! live habitually in his "great Taskmaster's eye." We quarrel not with his unhappy uncertainties of mind; they are but too incident to all imaginative and thoughtful spirits. We quarrel not with his "waiting and wondering" on the brink of the unseen; but his uncertainty should not have paralysed and emasculated a man of his gigantic proportions. If beset by doubts and demons, he ought to have tried at least to fight his way through them, as many a resolute spirit has done before him. What had he to endure, compared to Cowper, who for many years imagined that a being, mightier than the fallen angels —Ahrimanes himself—held him as his property, and yet who, under the pressure of this fearful delusion, wrote and did his best, and has left some works which, while satisfying the severest critics, are manuals and household words everywhere? Wilson, on the other hand, seldom wrote anything except from the compulsion of necessity. Although not a writer for bread, much of his writing arose to the tune of the knock of the printer's "devil;" and his efforts for the advancement of the race, although really sincere, were to the last degree fluctuating, irregular, and uncertain.

It is a proof, we think, of Wilson's weakness, as well as of his power, that he has been claimed as a possible prize on so many and such diverse sides. He might have been, says one, the greatest preacher of the age. He might have been, says another, the greatest actor of the day. He might have been, says a third, the greatest dramatist, next to Shakspere, that ever lived. He might have been, says a fourth, a powerful parliamentary orator. He might have been, says a fifth, a traveller superior to Bruce or Park. Now, while this proves the estimation in which men hold his vast versatility, it proves also, that there was something wrong and shattered in the structure of a mind which, while presenting so many angles to so many objects, never fully embraced any of them,

and while displaying powers so universal, has left results so comparatively slender.

Nevertheless, after all these deductions, where shall we look for his like again? A more generous, a more wide-minded, a more courteous, and a more gifted man, probably never lived. By nature he was Scotland's brightest son, not, perhaps, even excepting Burns; and he, Scott, and Burns, must rank everlastingly together as the first Three of her men of genius. A cheerless feeling of desolation creeps across us, as we remember—that majestic form shall press this earth no more; those eyes of fire shall sound human hearts no more; that voice, mellow as that of the summer ocean breaking on a silver strand, shall swell and sink no more; and that large heart shall no more mirror nature and humanity on its stormy, yet sunlit surface. Yet long shall Scotland, ay, and the world, continue to cherish his image, and to bless his memory; and whether or not he obtain a splendid mausoleum, he will not require it, for he can (the words he once applied to Scott are as true of himself)

"A mightier monument command—
The mountains of his native land."

HAZLITT AND HALLAM.

We have chosen the above two names as representing two opposite styles of criticism—the impulsive and the mechanical—or, otherwise, the genial and the learned. We have spoken of Hazlitt already, and have nothing to do with him now as a politician, or a historian, but simply as a critic; and, in speaking of Hallam, we have nothing to do with him as a historian, but solely as the writer of those literary criticisms which have recently been collected into a separate publication.

William Hazlitt was brutally abused while alive, and has been but partially appreciated since his death. Indeed, in many quarters he seems entirely forgotten. Sacrificing, as he did, popular applause in search of posthumous fame, he seems to have lost both—like the dog in the fable, shadow and substance seem alike to have given him the slip. Our proud and prosy Quarterlies, while showering praise on the misty nothings which often now abuse the name of scientific or philosophic criticism—those compounds of natural and acquired dulness which disguise themselves under German terminology, and are deemed profound—seldom name, or coldly underrate, the glowingly acute, gorgeously clear, and dazzlingly deep criticisms of poor Hazlitt.

Harry Cockburn thinks him ineffably inferior to Lord Jeffrey. Macaulay first steals from Hazlitt, and then puffs Hallam. Bulwer and Talfourd have done him justice; but rather in a patronising way. Horne did his best to imitate him, and paid back the pilferings in praise. But De Quincey and one or two more seem alone aware of the fact that no thinker of such rich seminal mind—of such genuine originality, insight, and enthusiasm—has been ever so neglected or outraged, as the author of the "Spirit of the Age."

Hazlitt was, in many respects, the most *natural* of critics. He was *born* to criticise, not in a small and captious way, but as a just, generous, although stern and rigorous judge. Nature had denied him great constructive, or dramatic, or synthetic power—the power of the highest kind of poet or philosopher. But he possessed that mixture in proper proportions of the acute and the imaginative, the profound and the brilliant, the cool and the enthusiastic, which goes to constitute the true critic. Hence his criticism is a fine compound—pleasing, on the one hand, the lover of analysis, who feels that its power can go no farther; and, on the other, the young and ardent votary of literature, who feels that Hazlitt has ex-

pressed in language what *he* only could "with the faltering tongue and the glistening eye." When he has a favourite, and especially an old favourite author to discuss, it becomes as great a luxury to witness as to feel his rapture. Even elderly enthusiasts, whose ardour is somewhat *passée*, might contemplate him with emotions such as Scott has so exquisitely described in Louis XI., when looking at the hungry Quentin Durward devouring his late and well-won breakfast. Youth—hot, eager, joyous youth—sparkles in Hazlitt's best criticisms even to the last. And yet, beside all his bursts and bravuras, there is always looking on the stern, clear, piercing eye of Old Analysis. Why is it that Hazlitt, thus eminently fitted to attract all classes, has failed to be generally popular? Many answers might be given to this question. There was first the special victimisation he underwent during his lifetime from the reviews and magazines. Old Gifford was his bitterest, although by no means his ablest opponent. The power wielded thirty years ago by that little arid mass of commonplace and dried venom is, to us, absolutely marvellous. The manner in which he exercised the critical profession showed, indeed, that he was perfectly skilled in his former one, especially in the adroit use of the awl. He was admirable at boring small holes; but beyond this he was nothing. If Shakspere's works had appeared in his time, he would have treated them precisely as he treated Shelley's and Keats', unless, indeed, they had been submitted to his revision before, or dedicated to him at publication. Otherwise, how he would have ostracised "Othello;" mauled "Macbeth;" torn-up the "Tempest;" mouthed, like a dog at the moon, against the "Midsummer Night's Dream;" laughed at "Lear;" raved at "Romeo and Juliet;" and admitted merit only in "Timon," because it suited his morbid temper, and in the "Comedy of Errors," because it melted down his evil humours into grim laughter. It is lamentable to think of such a man being respected by Byron, and feared by Hunt and Lamb. It is more lamentable still, to remember that he and his coadjutors were able to half-madden Shelley, to kill Keats, and to add gall and wormwood to the native bitterness of Hazlitt's spirit.

But he had other opponents, who, if not animated by all Gifford's spirit, had ten times his talent. Wilson and Lockhart bent all their young power against a writer whom both in their hearts admired, and from whom both had learned much. The first twenty-five volumes of "Blackwood's Magazine" are disgraced by incessant, furious, and scurrilous attacks upon the person, private character, motives, talents, and moral and religious principles of Hazlitt, which future ages shall regard with wonder, indignation, and disgust. "Ass," "blockhead," "fool," "idiot," "quack," "villain," "infidel," &c., are a specimen of the epithets applied to this master-spirit.

We see nothing wrong in genius now and then turning round to rend and trample on its pertinacious foes. But Hazlitt was far too thin-skinned. He felt his wounds too keenly, he acknowledged them too openly, and gave thus a great advantage to his opponents. This was partly accounted for from his nervous temperament, and partly from his precarious circumstances. It was very easy for Lord Jeffrey, sitting in state in his palace in Moray Place, to curl his lip in cool contempt, or even to burst out into laughter, over attacks on himself in "Ebony;" or for Wordsworth, in his drawing-room on Rydal Mount, to grumble over the "Edinburgh," ere dashing it to the other side of the room; it is very easy still, for those of us who are not dependent for subsistence on our writings, to treat insolent injustice with pity or scorn; but the tendency of such attacks upon Hazlitt was to snatch the bread from his mouth, to lower the opinion of his capacity with the booksellers, whose serf he was, and to drive him to mean subterfuges, which his soul abhorred, to prevent him literally from starving. He is said, a little before his death, to have met Horne, and said to him, "I have carried a volcano in my breast for the last three hours up and down Pall Mall; I have

striven mortally to quench, to quell it, but it will not. *Can you lend me a shilling? I have not tasted food for two days.*"

Want of thorough early training, an unsettled and wandering life, want of time for systematic study, and want of self-control and of domestic happiness, combined to lessen the artistic merit, and have limited to some extent the permanent power, of Hazlitt's writings. Hence they are full of faults—the faults never, however, of weakness, but of haste, carelessness, and caprice. They swarm with gossiping anecdote, with flashy claptrap, with egotism, with bitterest venom, and with sounding paradoxes. They are cast chiefly, too, in the form of slipshod essays; nor has he ever completed any great, solid, separate work, for his "Life of Napoleon" is not worthy of his powers. His superficial readers—especially if their minds have been previously poisoned by reading the "Quarterly" and "Blackwood"—fasten on these faults, and never get farther. "An amusing, flimsy writer," is the highest compliment they find in their hearts to bestow on one of the finest and deepest thinkers of the day. Our misty Germanisers, again, find him too clear, too brilliant, not sufficiently conversant with Kant, Fichte, Schiller, and Goethe, and vote him obsolete. Carlyle classes him with Dermody in one paper, and in another talks of him in such terms as these: "How many a poor Hazlitt must wander over God's verdant earth, like the unblest over burning deserts—passionately dig wells, and draw up only the dry quicksand, and at last die and make no sign." Such injustice is too rank long to continue rampant. Hazlitt, as a man, had errors of no little magnitude; but he was as sincere and honest a being as ever breathed. If not practically a Christian, he respected Christianity; he saw, though he shrank from, its unique and glorious character; he owned its unparalleled power; he has praised its Bible with all the enthusiasm of his heart, and with all the riches of his genius; and he would have burned his pen and the hand that held it, sooner than have set himself deliberately to sap by written inuendo, or blow up by open outrage, the faith in which his good old parents died. His writings constitute one of those quarries of thought, such as are also Bacon's "Essays," Butler's "Sermons," Boswell's "Johnson," and Coleridge's "Table Talk." They abound in gems, as sparkling as they are precious, and ever and anon a "mountain of light" lifts up its shining head. Not only are they full of profound critical *dicta*, but of the sharpest observations upon life and manners, upon history, and the metaphysics of the human mind. Descriptions of nature, too, are there, cool, clear, and refreshing as summer leaves. And then how fine are his panegyrics on the old masters and the old poets! And ever and anon he floats away into long glorious passages, such as that on Wordsworth and that on Coleridge, in the "Spirit of the Age"—such as his description of the effects of the Reformation—such as his panegyric on poetry—his character of Sir Thomas Browne—and his picture of the Reign of Terror! Few things in the language are greater than these. They resemble

> "The long-resounding march and energy divine"

of the ancient lords of English prose—the Drydens, the Brownes, the Jeremy Taylors, and the Miltons.

All so-called "beauties" of great authors we detest. They are as dull as almanacks or jest-books. They are but torn fallen feathers from the broad eagle-wing. Nor do we mean to suggest that Hazlitt's works should be subjected to such an equivocal process. But we should like to see his "Select Works," including a selection from his essays, the whole of his "Characteristics," and his "Characters of Shakspere's Plays"—all his lectures delivered at the Surrey Institution—a selection from his purely metaphysical works—certain passages from his "Life of Napoleon"—copious excerpts from his pictorial criticisms—and his "Spirit of the Age" entire. It is a disgrace to literature; and while there are cheap editions of Lamb and Hunt, and dear editions of Jeffrey, Smith, and Macaulay, there is no

good edition we know of, whether cheap or dear, of the works of a far more original thinker, eloquent writer, and earnest man, than any of them all.

We will allude but to one other feature in Hazlitt's critical character—we mean his attachment to Shakspere and Coleridge. Others admire Shakspere—Hazlitt loves and adores him; and this soft key of love opens to him many an intricate lock, and this deep light of adoration leads him safe through many a dark and winding way. Ulrici's criticism is just a "Midsummer Night's Dream" of Shakspere. It is not Shakspere himself—the clear and manly Englishman, as well as the universal genius—it is Shakspere seen through the mists of the Brocken, casting an enormous shadow, which is mistaken for, and criticised as, the substance. Indeed, we can conceive no spectacle more ludicrous than that of Shakspere in the shades reading Ulrici, and marvelling to find that he understood him so much better than himself, and saw more in him than he ever intended—nay, often the reverse of what he did intend.

Hazlitt read Shakspere with far greater perspicacity; saw his faults, and liked him better for them; took him at his word, believed what he said, and did not go about stumbling and groping for recondite meanings and merits in its author. Shakspere has now a great gallery of critics:—Johnson, with his sturdy generalities of encomium; Mrs Montague, with her elegant and lady-like, if not very profound tribute; Joseph Warton's graceful papers in the "Adventurer," as well as his brother's more elaborate testimony in his "History of English Poetry;" Goethe, in his fine remarks on "Hamlet" in "Wilhelm Meister;" George Moir, in his refined and thoughtful "Shakspere in Germany;" Mrs Jameson; De Quincey; Carlyle's striking sketch; Coleridge's wondrous talk about him; Hartley Coleridge's "Shakspere a Tory and a Gentleman;" Professor Wilson's scattered splendours on the subject in the "Noctes," &c. But love for the subject, profound and watchful study of it, the blended intellect and ardour of his nature, and the graces and powers of his style, render Hazlitt, in our judgment, the best limner of that standing wonder of the world; and to his warm and living portraits we most fondly and frequently recur.

Coleridge, too—a man resembling Shakspere in width and subtlety, although not in clearness and masculine strength and directness—was seen by Hazlitt as few else saw him, and shown by him more eloquently and enthusiastically than by any or all his other critics. He knew him in his youth. He met him first at Wem, in Shropshire, where his father was minister; and most beautifully has he described, in his "First Acquaintance with Poets," his meeting with the "noticeable man with large grey eyes." 'Tis, as we have said before, to us the most delightful of all Hazlitt's essays, striking as it does on some of our own early associations. Like Hazlitt, the author of this sketch was the son of a dissenting (though not a Unitarian) minister; like him, spent many a sad and solitary hour in the country, cheered, indeed, by books and by the loveliness and grandeur of nature; like him, has "shed tears over his unfinished manuscript," while in vain seeking adequately to transcribe his confused but burning impressions of nature and of literature; and, like him, has again and again been delighted and raised from the dust by the visits and sermons of gifted preachers, who came like sunbeams to the sequestered valley of his birth; and he can hardly, therefore, read "My First Acquaintance with Poets," or several other of Hazlitt's autobiographical essays, without a swelling heart and streaming eyes, as he thinks of the days of his own boyhood.

No man has better described than Hazlitt, Coleridge's after career, which was that of a comet among comets, more eccentric than all its lawless kindred; now assuming the form of a thin and gaseous vapour, and now becoming blood-red, solid-seeming, and

> "Firing the length of Ophiuchus huge
> In the Arctic sky."

Let it ever be remembered that he

fought the battle of Coleridge's fame, when he was under the cloud of public opinion and of the opium curse; and that, although separated from him afterwards by political and other differences, he never ceased to be his ardent eulogist, as well as his honest adviser.

Peace to the memory of William Hazlitt! That pale, haggard face; those eager, restless eyes; those dark grey locks; that brain, ever prolific of new thoughts; and that heart, ever palpitating with new, fierce, or rapturous passions—are now all still and quenched in the sepulchre. We dare rear no temple over his dust—nor is it worthy of a pyramid; but his works form, nevertheless, a noble monument—solid as marble, and clear and brilliant as flame—expressing at once the strength and the splendour of his unrivalled *critical* genius.

In point of learning, culture, calmness, and the command of the powers he has, Hallam, of course, excels Hazlitt, even as a bust is much smoother than a man's head; but he is altogether destitute of that fine instinctive sense of poetic beauty which was in Hazlitt's mind, and of that eloquent, fervid, and fearless expression of it which came, like inspiration, into Hazlitt's pen. The "gods have not made him poetical;" and when he talks about poetry, you are reminded of a blind man discoursing on the rainbow. He has far too much tact and knowledge to commit any gross blunder—nay, the bust seems often half-alive, but it never becomes more. You never feel that this man, who talks so ably about politics, and evidence, and international law, has a "native and indefeasible right" to speak to you about poetry. The power of criticising it is as completely denied him as is a sixth sense; and, worst, he is not conscious of the want.

For he has often essayed to criticise our greatest poets, and has displayed intimate knowledge of their writings, and of the ages in which they lived. But it is merely mechanical knowledge. He knows poets by *head*-mark, not by *heart*-recognition. He may see, but he scarcely feels, their beauties. He is not, indeed, one of those pitiful small snarlers, with microscopic eyes, who pick out petty faults in works of genius, blunders in syntax, perhaps, mixed metaphors, and so on, and present such splinters as adequate specimens of the building. Nor is he, like Dr Johnson, furnished with a blazing Cyclopean orb on one side of his head, and an eye totally blind on the other, so that his judgments, according to his position, are now the truest, and now the falsest, in literature—now final as the laws of the Medes, and now contemptible as the opinions of schoolboys. Hallam is seldom unduly minute, never unfair, and rarely onesided; his want is simply that of the warm insight which "loosens the bands of the Orions" of poetry, and gives a swift solution of all its splendid problems.

His paper on Ariosto is correct and creeping; although, surely, we must demur to his *dictum* that he was surpassed only by three of his predecessors—Homer, Virgil, and Dante. Has he forgotten Æschylus, Sophocles, and Lucretius? In his remarks on Tasso (which are otherwise good, Tasso being quite the artificial poet that Hallam can fully appreciate), he rather paradoxically says, that "the 'Jerusalem' is the great epic poem, in the strict sense, of modern times." Is Milton not a modern, and in what strict sense is "Paradise Lost" not an epic? What condition of the Epos does it not fulfil? His remarks on "Don Quixote" are poor, compared to Hazlitt's on the same subject in his paper on "Standard Novels," which appeared in the "Edinburgh Review." His paper on Spenser is judicious, and, on the whole, accurate, but has a general coldness of tone insufferable in reference to such a rich and imaginative writer, and contains one or two hyper-criticisms. For instance, he objects to the much-admired description of a forest:—

> "The sailing pine, the cedar proud and tall,
> The vine-prop elm, the poplar never dry,
> The builder oak, sole king of forests all,
> The aspine good for staves, the cypress funeral;"

because, forsooth, a natural forest never contains such a variety of species! This is sad work. Has he forgotten that the

"Fairy Queen" is not merely a poem, but a dream; and should not a dream have its own dream-scenery? We call his attention to the following passage from Addison—a critic of a very different order—a passage not less distinguished by its philosophic truth, than by its exquisite beauty:—

"The poet is not obliged to attend nature in the slow advances she makes from one season to another, or to observe her conduct in the successive production of plants and flowers; he may draw into his description all the beauties of spring and autumn, and make the whole year contribute something to render it the more agreeable. His rose-trees, woodbines, and jessamines may flower together, and his beds be covered at the same time with lilies, violets, and amaranths. His *soil* is not *restrained* to any *particular* set of *plants;* but is proper either for *oaks* or *myrtles,* and adapts itself to the products of every climate. Oranges may grow wild in it; myrrh may be met with in every hedge; and if he thinks it proper to have a grove of spices, he can quickly command sun enough to raise it. Nay, he can make several new species of flowers with richer scents and higher colours than any that grow in the gardens of nature. His concerts of birds may be as full and harmonious, and his woods as thick and gloomy, as he pleases. He is at no more expense in a long vista than in a short one, and can as easily throw his cascades from a precipice of half-a-mile high, as from one of twenty yards. He has his choice of the winds, and can turn the course of his rivers in all the variety of meanders that are most delightful to the reader's imagination."

Such are a poet's prerogatives, and would "Classic Hallam, much renown'd for Greek," snatch these from Spenser,

"High-priest of all the Muses' mysteries?"

In the same spirit he presumes, with some misgivings, however, to object to the celebrated stanza describing the varied concert of winds, waves, birds, voices, and musical instruments, in the "Bower of Bliss," and compares it to that which tormented Hogarth's "Enraged Musician!" And this is a critic on poetry!

His account of Shakspere begins with the following elegant sentence: — "Of William Shakspere, whom, through the *mouths* of those whom he has inspired to body forth the *modifications* of his mighty mind, we seem to know better than any human writer, it may be truly said that we scarcely know anything." Certainly, in another sense, he knows little of him! In the account that follows of Shakspere's plays, he actually sets "Love's Labour's Lost," that dull tissue of "mere havers," as they say in Scotland, and which many have doubted to be Shakspere's, since it displays not a spark of his wit, genius, or even sense, above the "Comedy of Errors," the most laughable farce in the world, above the romantic "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and above the "Taming of the Shrew," that delightful half-plagiarism of the great dramatist's. He accuses "Romeo and Juliet" of a "want of thoughtful philosophy." It is true that it does not abound in set didactic soliloquies like those of "Hamlet" or "Timon;" but how much of the *essence* of profoundest thought has gone to the production of Mercutio, and of the Apothecary, and that wierd shop of his. "Twelfth Night" he underrates when compared to "Much Ado about Nothing." We dare to differ from him in this, and to prefer the humours of Sir Toby and Sir Andrew—not to speak of Malvolio—to the immortal Dogberry and Verges themselves. How feeble what he says of Lear, having in madness "thoughts more profound than in his prosperous hour he could have conceived," when compared to Charles Lamb's remarks on the same subject, although suggested apparently by them! Of "Timon" he coldly predicates, "it abounds with signs of his genius." "Timon!" the grandest burst of poetic misanthropy ever written, certain soliloquies, nay, sentences, in which condense all the satire of Juvenal and the invective of Byron! "What wouldst thou to Athens?" asks Apemantus.—"Thee thither in a whirlwind."—"What wouldst thou best liken to thy flatterers?"—"Women nearest, but men—*men are the things*

themselves!" Another critic speaks of the excellent scolding of Timon, as if it were the Billingsgate of a furious fish-woman, and not the foul spittle of an angry God. Just as we have said elsewhere that De Quincey's third "Suspirium de Profundis" is a sigh that can only be answered by the Second Advent, so Shakspere's protest in "Timon" against man as he is, and things as they are, lies yet, and shall lie, unlifted and unreplied to, till the great Day of Judgment. That "Coriolanus" has the "grandeur of sculpture," is a criticism suggested rather by Kemble's personation of him than by the character himself. He, as Shakspere describes him, is no more like sculpture than Fergus MacIvor, or any other fierce, proud, restless Highland chieftain. He may be, as a marble statue, colossal; but surely not, as a marble statue, calm. The rest of his remarks on Shakspere are just the thousand-times-reiterated truisms about his creative power, knowledge of human nature, superiority to the dramatists of his age, and contain nothing but what had been said before, and said far better, by Johnson and Hazlitt.

His observations on Beaumont, Fletcher, and Massinger show deep acquaintance with those writers, deeper than most people who regard their own moral reputation would now care to be known to possess. We may once for all tell the uninitiated that more beastly, elaborate, and incessant filth and obscenity are not to be found in all literature, than in the plays of these three dramatists; and that we, at least, could only read one or two of them through. They repelled us by the strong shock of disgust, and we have never since been able to understand of what materials the men are made who have read and re-read them, paused and lingered over them, dwelt fondly on their beauties, and even ventured to compare them to the plays of Shakspere; the morality of which, considering his age, is as wonderful as the genius. If our readers think this criticism extreme, let them turn, not to the disgusting books themselves, but to Coleridge's "Table Talk," and note what he says of them. Hallam, while admitting that there was much to condemn in their indecency and even licentiousness of principle, says, "Never were dramatic poets more thoroughly gentlemen, according to the standard of their times." May our age be preserved from such gentility!

In his criticism on "Lycidas" occurs this sentence, which we beg our readers to compare with what he had said previously of the forest in the "Fairy Queen:"—

"Such poems as 'Lycidas' are read with the willing abandonment of the imagination to a waking dream, and require only that general possibility, that combination of images, which common experience does not reject as incompatible!"

So that thus common experience is made the gauge of the poet's waking dreams. Alas! poor Shelley, Keats, and Coleridge, what is to become of your Revolts of Islam, Hyperions, and Rimes of the Ancient Mariners, when tried by "common experience," assisted in her assizes by the author of the "Constitutional History?"

In the next paragraph but one he tells us that the "Ode on the Nativity" is truly "Pindaric;" one of the most unlucky epithets ever applied. What resemblance there is between the swift, sharp-glancing, and fiery odes of the "inspired Olympic jockey," and that slow-moving, solemn strain of the English poet, we cannot even divine. In his account of "Paradise Lost," he assures us that the "subject is managed with admirable skill!" We rather like this *Puer puer* style, this clapping on the back, from such a man as Henry Hallam to such a man as John Milton. It requires, too, a certain power and courage in a man to be able so gravely to enunciate such truisms as the above, and as the following:—"The Fall of Man has a more general interest than the Crusade." A little farther on, however, we are startled with what is neither a truism, nor even true. "The first two books confirm the sneer of Dryden, that Satan is Milton's hero, since they develop a plan of action in that potentate which is ultimately successful: the triumph which he and his host must

experience in the fall of man being hardly compensated by their temporary conversion into serpents." As if that were the only compensation; as if the tenor of the whole argument were not to show that the second Adam was to bruise the Serpent's head, by recovering the majority of the race from Satan's grasp, and by at last "consuming Satan and his perverted world." The object of Satan was not only to ruin man, but to rob God of glory; and the purpose of the poet is to show how neither part of the plan was successful, but that it all redounded to the devil's misery and disgrace, and to the triumph of God and of the Messiah. So that, if it be essential to the hero of an epic that he be victorious, Satan is not the hero of the "Paradise Lost," any more than of the "Paradise Regained," although he is undoubtedly the most interesting and powerfully-drawn character in the former.

Or what do our readers think of this? —"Except one circumstance, which seems rather physical intoxication than anything else, we do not find any sign of depravity superinduced upon the transgression of our first parents." Has Mr Hallam forgotten that magnificent scene of their mutual recrimination, and of the gross injustice Adam does to Eve, by calling her "that bad woman," "that serpent," &c.? Was there no sign of begun depravity *there?* And was even "physical intoxication" possible to undepraved beings?

In the next paragraph he speaks of Homer's "diffuseness;" rather a novel charge, we ween. Of repetition he has often been accused; but never before of diffuseness. His lines are lances, as compressed as they are keen.

A few pages afterwards Hallam says:— "I scarcely think that he had begun his poem before the anxiety and trouble into which the public strife of the Commonwealth and the Restoration had thrown him, gave leisure for immortal occupations." Aubrey, on the contrary, expressly asserts that Milton began his great work two years before the Restoration. A fine sentence follows, in which the bust really seems nearly alive, and you cry, *O si sic omnia*, or even *multa!*—"Then the remembrance of early reading came over his dark and lonely path, like the moon emerging from the clouds." Then follows an attempt at antithesis, which seems to us extremely unsuccessful:—"Milton is more a musical than a picturesque poet. He describes visible things, but he feels music." What does this mean? or, at least, where is its force? Had he said, "He *is*," or "*becomes* music," it had been a novel and a beautiful thought. He then brings forward the old exploded objection to Milton's lists of sonorous names. Many have stated, but few, we hope, have ever felt this objection. To those possessed of historical lore, these names, as Macaulay remarks, are charmed names; to others they are like a foreign language spoken by a Gavazzi, or sung by a Jenny Lind—their music affects them almost as deeply as their meaning could. If jargon, they are at least the mighty jargon of a magician opening doors in rocks, rooting up pines, and making palaces and mountains come and go at his pleasure.

After somewhat underrating "Paradise Regained," he closes his estimate of Milton with a good account of "Samson Agonistes;" a poem the "sculptural simplicity" of which seems to suit his taste better than the grandeurs of the "Paradise Lost," or the graces of the "Paradise Regained."

We could have gone on much longer, proving Hallam's incapacity as a critic of poets, but must at present stop. We have ventured on these remarks from no personal feeling to the author; in fact, although we have spoken of him as living, we are not sure but he is dead. To detract from his fame as a scholar and a historian, or rather critic on history, were a hopeless and an unjust attempt. But we are sorry to see powers so efficient in other fields worse than wasted upon the sides of Parnassus.

JEFFREY AND COLERIDGE.

Our foregoing paper is on Hallam and Hazlitt. Our next is on two men who also constitute types of our two main modern schools of criticism—namely, the mechanical and the impulsive—although in both of them there are other elements blended: Jeffrey, much more than Hallam, having the genial playing above the hard surface of his mechanical judgment; and Coleridge, much more than Hazlitt, having a philosophical basis established below his impulsive eloquence of thought.

Lord Jeffrey had, unquestionably, many of the elements which unite to form a genuine critic. He had a subtle perception of a certain class of intellectual and literary beauties. He had a generous sympathy with many forms of genius. He had a keen logic with which to defend his views—a lively wit, a fine fancy, and a rapid, varied eloquence with which to expound and illustrate them. There was about his writing, too, a certain inimitable ease, which looked at first like carelessness, but which on closer inspection turned out to be the compounded result of high culture, much intercourse with the best society, and much practice in public speaking. His knowledge of law, too, had whetted his natural acuteness to a razor-like sharpness. His learning was not, perhaps, massive or profound; but his reading had been very extensive, and, retained in its entireness, became exceedingly serviceable to him in all his mental efforts. His genius possessed great versatility, and had been fed with very various provision, so that he was equally fitted to grapple with certain kinds of philosophy, and to discourse on certain schools of poetry, and was familiar alike with law, literature, metaphysics, and history. The moral spirit of his writings was that of a gentleman and man of the world, who was at all times ready to trample on meanness, and to resent every injury done to the common codes of honour, decency, generosity, and external morality.

Such is, we think, a somewhat comprehensive list of the good properties of Jeffrey as a critic. But he laboured not less certainly under various important defects, which we proceed now with all candour to notice. He was not, in the first place, although a subtle and acute, a profound or comprehensive thinker. He seems constantly, by a tentative process, seeking for his theories, seldom coming down upon them from the high summit of philosophical views. He has very few deep glimpses of truth, and scarcely any aphoristic sentences. His language, rhetoric, and fancy, are often felt to be rich; his vein of thought seldom if ever—it is diffused in long strata, not concentrated into solid masses. He had no nuggets in his mines! Hence he is far from being a suggestive writer. Compare him in this respect with Burke, with Coleridge, with Foster! We are not blaming him for not having *been* one of these men; we are merely thus severely defining what we think the exact limits, and measuring the proper proportions, of his mind.

Although possessed of much and brilliant fancy, he had no high imagination, and therefore little true sympathy with it. The critic of the first poets must be himself potentially a poet. To *see* the sun, implies only eyes; but to *sing* the sun aright, implies a spark of his fire in the singer's soul. Jeffrey saw Milton, Homer, Dante, Shakspere, and the writers of the Bible, but he could not sing their glories. Indeed, in reference to the first three and the last of these mighty poets, he has never, so far as we remember, uttered one word, or at least shown any thorough or profound appreciation of their power. Who quotes his panegyrics on Milton and Dante, if such things there be? Where has he spoken of Isaiah, David, or Job? Shakspere, indeed, he has often and gracefully praised; but it is the myriad-minded in undress that he loves, and not as he is bound up to the full pitch of his transcendent genius—he likes him better as the Shakspere of "Romeo," and the "Midsummer Night's Dream," than as the Shakspere of "Mac-

beth," "Lear," and "Hamlet;" and his remarks, eloquent though they are, show no such knowledge of him as is manifested by Hazlitt, Coleridge, and Lamb. Almost all the great original poets of his own time he has either underrated, or attacked or passed over in silence. Think of Wordsworth, Southey, Coleridge, Shelley! Many of the best English writers of the past are treated with indifference or neglect. Burke he only mentions once or twice. Johnson he sometimes sneers at, and sometimes patronises. To Swift as a writer he has done gross injustice. Sir Thomas Browne seems unknown to him. Young of the "Night Thoughts," Thomson, and Cowper, are all underrated. To Jeremy Taylor, indeed, he has given his due meed of praise, and to the early English dramatists much more than their due. And who, on the other hand, are his special favourites? Pope he admired for his brilliant wit and polish; Crabbe for his terseness and truth; Moore for his light and airy fancy; Campbell for his classic energy and national spirit; and Byron, not for the awful horn of blasphemy and creative power which rose late on his forehead in "Cain," "Heaven and Earth," and the "Vision of Judgment," but for his "Giaours" and "Corsairs," and the other clever centos of that imitative period of his poetical life. In praising these writers he was so far right, but he was not right in exalting them above their greater contemporaries; and the fact that he did so, simply shows that there was in his own mind a certain vital imaginative deficiency, disqualifying him from criticising the highest specimens of the art of poetry. What would we think of a critic on the fine arts, who should prefer Flaxman to Angelo, or Reynolds to Raphael, or Danby to Leonardo da Vinci?

In connection with this want of high imagination, there was in Jeffrey a want of abandonment and enthusiasm: of false enthusiasm he was incapable, although he was sometimes deceived by it in others. But the genuine child-like ardour which leads a man to clap his hands or weep aloud as he reads some noble passage of poetry or prose, if it ever was in him, was early frozen up by the influences of the society with which he mingled in his early days. We disagree with Thomas Carlyle in many, and these very momentous, things; but we thoroughly agree with him in his judgment of the mischief which logic and speculation wrought upon the brains and hearts of the Scottish lawyers and literati about the end of last century and the beginning of this. Among this class Jeffrey was reared, and it was no wonder that the wings of his enthusiasm, which were never of eagle breadth, were sadly curtailed. Indeed, the marvel is that they were not torn away by the roots, and that he *has* indited certain panegyrics on certain favourite authors, which, if cold, resemble at least cold cast, as we see sometimes in frost-work, into the form of fire.

What a propensity to sneer there was, especially in his earlier writings! Stab he could not—at least, in the dark. He left that Italian task to another and a more malignant spirit, of whom THIS "world is not worthy," and who, maugre Jeffrey's kind interference to prevent him, often dipped his stiletto in poison—the poison of his own fierce passions. But Jeffrey's sneers were nearly as formidable as his coadjutor's stabs. They were so light, and apparently gentle! The sneer at a distance might almost have been mistaken for an infant smile; and yet how thoroughly it did its work! It was as though the shadow of poison could kill. It was fortunate that alike good sense and generosity taught him in general to reserve his power of sarcasm for those whom it might annoy and even check in popularity, but could not harm in person or in purse. Jeffrey flew at noble game —at Scott, and Southey, and Wordsworth. This doubtless was done in part from the levity and persiflage characteristic of an aspiring Edinburgh youth. Truly does the writer quoted in the last paragraph say, that there is "a certain age when all young men should be clapped into barrels, and so kept till they come to years of discretion"—so intolerable is their conceit, and so absurd their projects

and hopes—especially when to a large quantum of impudence and a minimum of true enthusiasm they add only that "little learning" which is so common and so dangerous a thing in this our day. Jeffrey, although rising ineffably above the wretched young prigs and pretenders of his own or the present time, was seldom entirely free from the spirit of intellectual puppyism. There was a pertness about his general manner of writing. Amazingly clever, adroit, subtle—he always gave you the impression of smallness; and you fancied that you saw Wordsworth, while still smarting under his arrows, lifting him up in his hand, as did Gulliver a Lilliputian, and admiring the finished proportions of his tiny antagonist. And yet how, with his needle-like missiles, did he shed round pain and consternation upon the mightiest of the land! How did James Montgomery, and William Godwin, and Coleridge, and Lamb, and Southey, and a hundred more of mark and likelihood, groan, reel, and stagger, when they felt themselves blinded by weapons which they despised, and victimised by an enemy they previously could hardly see!

Latterly, indeed, we notice in Jeffrey's style less of the mannikin, and more of the man—less of the captious criticaster, and more of the large-minded judge. His paper on Byron's Tragedies is a specimen of his better manner, being bold and masculine; and it does not seem, like many of his articles, as if it should have been written on a watch-paper. In treating Warburton, too, he gets up on tiptoe, in sympathy with the bulky bishop; nor does he lose either his dignity or balance in the effort. But his attack on Swift is by far his most powerful review. We demur to his estimate of his talents as a writer. Swift could have swallowed a hundred Jeffreys. *His* power was simple and strong, as one of the energies of Nature. He did by the moving of his finger what others could not by the straining and agitation of their whole frame. It was a stripped, concentred, irresistible force which dwelt in him—fed, too, by unutterable misery; and hence his power, and hence his pollution. He was strong, naked, coarse, savage, and mud-loving, as one of the huge primeval creatures of chaos. Jeffrey's sense of polish, feeling of elegance and propriety, consciousness of inferiority in most things, and consciousness of superiority in some, all contributed to rouse his ire at Swift; and, unequal as on the whole the match was, the clever Scotchman beat the monster Paddy. One is reminded of Gulliver's contest with some of the gigantic reptiles and wasps of Brobdignag. Armed with his hanger, that redoubtable traveller made them resile, or sent them wounded away. And thus the memory of Swift bears Jeffrey's steel mark on it, and shall bear it for ever.

And yet, although Jeffrey was capable of high moral indignation, he appears to have had very little religious susceptibility. He was one of those who seem never either to have heartily hated or heartily loved religion. He had thought on the subject; but only as he had thought on the guilt of Mary Queen of Scots—as an interesting historical puzzle, and not as a question deeply affecting his own heart and personal interests. We find in his writings no sympathy with the high heroic faith, the dauntless resistance, and the long-continued sufferings, of the religious confessors and Covenanters of his own country. He could lay indeed a withering touch on their enemies; but them he passed by in silence, or acknowledged only by sneers. In this respect, however, as well as in his literary tone and temper, we notice a decided improvement in his latter days. He who, in an early number of the "Edinburgh Review," applied a dancing-master standard to brawny Burns, and would have shorn and scented him down to the standard of Edinburgh modish life, in a diary written a little before his death, calls him a "glorious being," and wishes he had been contemporary with him, that he might have called at his Dumfries hovel, and comforted his unhappy spirit. And he who had sneered, times and ways without number, at Scottish Presbyterian religion, actually shed tears when he saw the Free Church party leaving the General Assembly to cast

themselves on the Voluntary Principle; and said that no country but Scotland could have exhibited a spectacle so morally sublime. In both these respects, indeed, latterly, the re-action becomes so complete as to be rather ludicrous than edifying. Think of how, in his letters, he deals with Dickens; how he kisses and fondles him as a lady does her lap-dog; how he weeps instead of laughing over those miserable Christmas tales of his! How different had Dickens's worse productions appeared in the earlier part of Jeffrey's critical career! As to religion, his tone becomes that of senile sentimentalism.

Yet let him have his praise, as one of the acutest, most fluent, lively, and on the whole amiable, of our modern Scottish celebrities; although not, as Cockburn calls him, in that lamentable life of his, at which the public have scarcely yet ceased to laugh, "the first of British critics!!!" His fame, except in Edinburgh, is fast dwindling away; and although some passages in his writings may long be quoted, his memory is sure of preservation, chiefly from the connection of his name with that of the "Edinburgh Review," and with those powerful but uncertain influences in literature, politics, philosophy, and religion, which that Review once wielded.

Coleridge was a man of another order. Indeed, we are half tempted to unite with De Quincey in calling him the "largest and most spacious intellect that has hitherto existed among men." All men, of course, compared with God, are fragments. Shakspere himself was, and so was Coleridge. But, of all men of his time (Goethe not excepted), Coleridge approached nearest to our conception of a whole; and it was his own fault principally that he did not approach to this as nearly as Shakspere. He had, as he boasted of himself, "energic reason and a shaping mind." He had imagination, intellect, reason, logic, fancy, and a hundred other faculties, all developed in nearly equal proportions, and all cultivated to nearly the same degree. He had, besides, a high and solemn sense of God, and a firm belief in his personality. Such powers were united with all the mechanical gifts of language and musical utterance, which tend to make them influential on the general public, and with a fine bodily constitution. What then was wanting to this new Adam, thus endowed in the prodigality of heaven? Only two things —a will, and a wife; or, more properly speaking, one—a wife who could have become a will to him, and who could have led him to labour, regularity, and virtue. No such blessing was conferred on poor Coleridge. His "pensive Sara" failed, without any positive fault on her side, but from mere non-adaptation, in managing her gifted lord. And thus, left to his own rudderless impulses, he drifted on in a half-drunken dream, till he neared the rocks of ruin; and only at the call of Cottle and Southey turned round, in time to save a fraction of his intellect, of his character, and of his peace. Infinite and eternal regrets must hover above the record which tells of the history of Coleridge; the more as he neither fully went down, nor fully escaped, the Maëlstrom; in either of which cases, his fate had been more instructive and even less mysterious than it now is.

Yet we must here emphatically protest against Carlyle's recent attempt to depreciate Coleridge. It is altogether unworthy of the author of the "Life of Schiller," although infinitely worthy of the author of the "Model Prisons"—that wretched inhumanity, which seemed like Swift's last ghastly grin gone astray, and re-appearing on the lips of Sartor. Coleridge, it seems, had nothing but "beautiful philosophic moonshine." Better surely philosophic moonshine than "philosophic *reek*." Better try by moonshine to calm or brighten the jarring waves of this troubled age, than to darken them by a mist of jargon, or churn them into wilder fury by expletives of blasphemy. Coleridge, we admit, did not fully accomplish the task he undertook; but it *was* a task, and a task of heroic daring—better and nobler certainly than the act of lying down in the path of the world, and uttering howls of despair and furious invectives—invectives and exclamations which were

endured for awhile, for the sake of their music and poetry; but which, having outlived that poetry and that music, are now very generally and justly regarded as the outcries of one who, naturally a noble being, has been partly soured and partly spoiled into something we can hardly venture to describe, except that it is rabidly hopeless, and hopelessly rabid. Alas! alas! for the Carlyle of 1829, when the article on Burns appeared—

"If thou beest he; but oh! how fallen, how changed!"

It is not our purpose to enter on the *mare magnum* of *the* Coleridgean question as a whole; but to speak simply and shortly of him in his critical function and faculty. That partook of the vast enlargement and varied culture of his mind. He arose at a time when criticism had fallen as low as poetry. Hayley was then the leading poet, and Blair the ruling critic! The "Edinburgh Review" had not risen, when a dark-haired man, "more fat than bard beseems," with ivory forehead, misty eye, boundless appetite for Welsh mutton, turnips, and flip, "talking like an angel, and doing nothing at all," commenced to talk and lecture on poetry all along the Bristol Channel—in Shropshire and in Shrewsbury, in Manchester and in Birmingham; and so new and striking were his views, so eloquent his language, and so native his enthusiasm, that all men's hearts burned within them as he spoke. He "threw," says Hazlitt, "a great stone into the torpid and stagnant waters of criticism." He set up Shakspere above Pope; he praised Thomson and Cowper, as vastly superior to even Addison and Goldsmith; he magnified Collins over Gray; he asserted the immeasurable superiority of Burke to all his contemporaries; he turned attention to the ancient ballad poetry of Britain; and he pointed his finger toward the great orb of German genius which was then rising slowly, and amid heavy clouds, over the horizon of the British mind. He did more than this; he made his audiences for the first time hear poetry read, not with the disgusting tricks of such elocution as was then, and is still taught, but as poets should read it, and as lovers of poetry should desire it to be read. And the poetry he did read was sometimes *his own*—the fine fresh incense of his young enthusiasm and insight, coloured by the hues of heaven as *it* ascended up on high.

The effect he produced was greatly increased afterwards, by the influences of a visit to Germany upon his mind and his eloquence. This, instead of deadening, simply directed the current of his enthusiasm. It made him a *wise* enthusiast. He could now substantiate his statements, made at first from intuitions, by critical principles, which were, indeed, just intuitions grown old and established. He had greatly profited by reading Lessing, Goethe, and Schiller, and he set himself to translate them, in various ways, to his countrymen. It mattered not though his works did not circulate; *he* circulated, and wherever he went, intellectual virtue went out of him. He scattered critical dust—and it was fire-dust—along his path; and such men as Lamb, and Hazlitt, and Southey, and De Quincey, and Lloyd, were ever ready to collect it, and to make it, and perhaps sometimes to call it, their own. For several years, in fact, the controversy of criticism amounted to a brisk fire between the "Edinburgh Review," stationary in the metropolis of Scotland, and S. T. Coleridge, wandering at his own will through merry England, from London to the Lakes, and from the Lakes to Bristol, or to London back again. At the outset, the "Review" had the advantage; but ultimately Coleridge, Wordsworth, and their party, talked and wrote its criticism down—nay, best of all, converted the "Review" to their *side*, though never fully to *themselves*.

It is unfortunate that Coleridge has not condensed his criticism into any distinct system, or wrote it out into any series of critical papers. Hence we have only fragments, such as are scattered through his "Friend" and "Biographia Literaria," or found in his "Table Talk." From these, however, it is very easy to see some of the leading principles on which all his criticism proceeds. His two great principles

were, first, the difference between the imagination and the fancy; and, secondly, the necessity of an organic unity to all the higher works of art. The first of these, although not, we think, just, led him to the strong distinction he perpetually draws between the *soi-disant* poetry of Pope, Addison, and Darwin; and that of Shakspere, Milton, and the rest of our great poets. His inculcation of organic unity in works of genius is unquestionably pushed too far—so far, indeed, that on his principles there are only one or two poems, however many poets there may be, in the world. But it has done good, notwithstanding, in curbing that tendency to fragmentary and fugitive effort which has beset so many poets; and in opening their eyes to what is certainly the most difficult peak in the poetic art. Coleridge, too, has strongly insisted upon poets studying philosophy as the basis of their song—seeking to construct their verse and language upon scientific principles, and consecrating their gift to the Great Giver. Were poets acting on his advice, we should have every one of them ready to "give a reason" for the inspiration that was in him; and what is much better, all singing harmoniously with the harps of angels around the manger at Bethlehem and the empty grave of the Risen Redeemer. He has also attempted to distinguish the *differentia* of genius—finding the meaning of it in the name—which so closely connects it with the genial nature and the spontaneous powers; a distinction which De Quincey has recently borrowed, and illustrated with his usual felicity.

What a book the "Collected Criticisms of S. T. (alas, not *St.!*) Coleridge" might have been, had he written a hundred papers like that he wrote about Sir T. Browne, on the blank leaf of one of his volumes! But a completed Coleridge had been too noble a product for us as yet—"a thing to dream of, not to see." It is a curious question—"Is this and are other such fragments finished in another world?" This we cannot tell; but certainly it is very pleasant to conceive of them as possible, and to form idealisms of the future of men who, on this earth compassed about with infirmities, and even betrayed into deep and fatal errors, have yet forced their irresistible way into the admiration of our intellects, and the pity or love of our hearts.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Among the great unknowns or half-knowns of the day, there are few less generally appreciated than the author of "Gebir," the "Imaginary Conversations," and the "Examination of Shakspere." We remember once asking at the keeper of a large public library, if he had any of Landor's works? The reply was—"None, except his 'Travels in Africa.' Has he written any more?" confounding him, *proh pudor!* with Clapperton's enterprising body-man. It was in keeping with the story of a person in a commercial town, who, when some wight from Edinburgh was speaking of Coleridge and Shelley, asked eagerly, "What *firm* is that? I never heard of it before; does it drive a good business?" And yet there are not many authors of the age about whom posterity will make more particular inquiries, than about this same recluse, saturnine, and high-minded Savage. His soul is deeply steeped in the proud element of the past. He is not only a man of profound and varied erudition, but he lives and has his being in the olden time. His style is dyed in antiquity; his genius wears upon its wings, like a rich sunset, the hues of all perished ages. Landor is a Greek, and yet holds of the romantic school too—loves equally the stately and buskined heroes of Athenian song, and the "serene creators of immortal things," who have written in the "shadow of Skiddaw, and by Grasmere springs." He is a solitary enthusiast sitting with half-

shut eye in his still study, or under the groves of golden Italy, and, in quaint dialogue, or fine pantomime, conversing with the past. The "dead, but sceptred sovereigns, who still rule our spirits from their urns," appear at his spell, and range themselves around him. Pericles, the Jupiter of Athens, stands with folded arms and collected might, as when he went to "shake the arsenal and fulmine over Greece." Aspasia bends beside him her majestic form, and turns toward him her love-lit eyes. Alcibiades, a restless shade, wanders to and fro. Spenser stands up serene, pouring out melancholy and mellow accents, as erst on "Mulla's shore." Shakspere's divine front—Milton's eyes, twinkling in vain to find the day—Cromwell's haggard countenance—Chatham's tempestuous gesture—Fox's choking accents of fervour—Pitt's stately solemnity—Napoleon's eagle gaze—Southey's form, erect as his own holly-tree—the large grey eyes of Porson—are all reproduced as in a magic mirror, and the soul of the day-dreamer is glad. He speaks to them in their own language, for he has learned "the large utterance of those early gods," and as a younger brother do they admit him into their lofty circle. Landor is suited for a former age:—Greece in the days of its glory; or Rome when still a republic; or England when Elizabeth was on the throne, Burleigh in the council, Raleigh on the deck, Bacon on the woolsack, Shakspere on the stage—any of these ages would have been the element of his spirit. The dim light of imperfect civilisation, when rare but rude virtues, and stupendous intellects, towering at deep angles from the crowd, loomed most largely, would have been the light for him. Everything about him—his thought, his style, his disinterested daring of tone and spirit, the air of eld which breathes around—reminds us of primitive ages, when the human heart, the human soul, the human size, were larger than now. How can such a man sympathise with the ongoings of an age like this? How turn from marking the fine parabola of the eagle's flight, to watch the bickering movements of a railway train? No wonder that, while love and admiration are freely accorded by him to the past, his abiding feeling for the present is disdain. Some such feeling does at times curl his lip, and ruffle the deep of his mind. You see it, they tell us, in his air and bearing. You see it in the impatient, large, fierce, and contemptuous character of his handwriting, as if it were beneath him to sign his name. You have it dashed in your face in those ebullitions of personal and political prejudice by which it pleases him to spoil the symmetry and mar the spirit of his best speculations, and to cause the very voices of the dead to ventriloquise the peculiar passions of his nature. You see it in the extreme fastidiousness of his taste, and the unmitigated harshness of the verdicts he passes on many of his contemporaries. Yet even in this disdain there is something noble: it resembles what we could imagine the feeling of some superhuman potentate, cast down from his starry throne to a subordinate station on earth, or that of one of the great of antiquity fallen from his high estate and heroic age upon the evil days and evil tongues of a cold and late generation; or he may be compared to his own shell, which might be conceived to mingle contempt for the commonplace ornaments by which it is surrounded, with the joy wherewith—

"Pleased it remembers its august abodes,
And murmurs as the ocean murmurs there."

These are the far-famed lines on a shell which Wordsworth has imitated, and everybody praised, and which, if they will not immortalise the name of Landor, nor embalm the poem of "Gebir," where they occur, are assuredly immortalised and embalmed themselves. And never, in remotest time, shall any one who has once heard or read them, gaze into the white depth of the child of ocean, or apply to his ear its polished coolness, and hear, or seem to hear, the faint and far-off murmur of the main, without imagining that these are the words which the gentle oracle is uttering, and this the meaning of the spiritual and mysterious music. They are among those rare lines which,

giving to a common thought or belief an expression poetic and ideally perfect, stamp themselves at once on the heart and memory of the world. Some writers, by one true and strong line, render oblivion impossible. Who does not bless the nameless warrior who has left the noble epitaph—"*Siste viator, heroem calcas*," as his sole memorial; and with deeper gratitude the Eton boy, also nameless, who, when verses were prescribed on the miracle of turning water into wine, brought up the single line—"*Vidit et erubuit nympha pudica Deum?*" So cheaply, sometimes, does genius purchase immortal fame. But, apart from those felicitous lines, and from his splendid "Count Julian," the "Conversations" form the main pillar of Landor's reputation. They are too often, it is true, destitute of vraisemblance and dramatic skill; too often resemble uneasy interlocutions between the various faculties and phases of one mind; are poisoned by political allusion; swarm with quaintnesses and crotchets; nor are the speeches always characteristic; nor do the speakers, in Boswell phrase, always "talk their best." The "Second Dialogue," published in "Blackwood," between Southey and Porson, is senselessly and malignantly minute. It is itself a proof—Coleridge to the contrary, notwithstanding—that malevolence may clothe itself in wealthy and redundant imagery, and remain malevolent still. We surrender it entire into the hands of the clever person who caricatured it in an after number. Not so Tasso and Cornelia, where, at length, the quicksilver of that strange mind is caught and fixed. It is worth many "Laments of Tasso." How delicately contrasted is the wayward irritability of the poet, and the more than motherly tenderness of the sister! It is "love watching madness with unalterable *mien*." Glide where the wild river of his mind may, she accompanies it like a soft green bank, at once restraining and beautifying its course. In all those dialogues, we are compelled to admire the hoarded wisdom—the familiarity with the details of the most distant periods—the original reflections—the infinite variety and quaint felicity of illustration. And we reflect with keen regret on the fantastic and fragmentary form in which they present themselves to our notice. In these *disjecta membra*, he has scattered and shattered powers adequate to the most heroic tasks. He has sent forth a flight of November meteors, when he might have constructed a world.

Such is, perhaps we should say such was, Walter Savage Landor, who deems himself a hero in an unheroic age—a giant in Lilliput—and who is a sleep-walker amid the passing crowd. Gifted, in the very prodigality of nature, with penetration, fancy, eloquence, of a jagged brilliance, and an unrivalled power of reproducing and rekindling the cold ashes of the past, he has become little more than the echo-cliff, catching, concentrating, warping, repeating the varied voices of antiquity. A picturesque, towering station he thus holds. Like Mont Blanc reflecting the light of day after it has died to the valley, does he shower upon us the relict radiance of other ages. This is the high end he has in part fulfilled, and which in part covers his coldness and contempt for the "ignorant present time," his faults of taste, and acerbities of temper. Enough surely for one man, in a period when labour is so intensely divided, when every corner of the literary vineyard is so fully occupied, to have reanimated the Athenian age in his "Pericles and Aspasia;" to have unrolled the shroud of Shakspere; "built up" that pile of forehead, cleansed and kindled those sagacious eyes, and put into those rich revived lips words not unworthy of the myriad-minded, in the "Examination;" in his poetry to have illumined the intrenched obscurities of his unavoidale style by gleams of rare power and beauty; and in the "Imaginary Conversations" to have ranged over every age—shooting his soul into sages, and statesmen, and poets, and grammarians, and conquerors of every shape and degree; catching their spirit, dissecting their motives, thinking their thoughts, speaking their words, yet casting into, and over all, the peculiarity and boldness of his

own intellect. We take our leave of him in his own noble words. Like his own Julian—

"Wakeful he sits, and lonely and unmoved,
Beyond the arrows, shouts, and views of men;
As oftentimes, an eagle, ere the sun
Throws o'er the varying earth his early ray,
Stands solitary, stands immoveable,
Upon some highest cliff, and rolls his eye,
Clear, constant, unobservant, unabased,
In the cold light, above the dews of morn."

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY.

FIRST SITTING.

We have heard often keen discussions on the question, Is Thomas Macaulay, in the strict sense, a man of genius? Now, in order to qualify ourselves for determining this question, we must first inquire what genius is? a question of some moment in a book which professes to be a gallery of contemporary genius.

We can conceive of nothing more indefinable than genius. It is so on account of the complexity of the elements which make it up. It is not one thing, nor is it many things, but it is the one subtle result of many elements subordinated into harmony and completeness. We shall perhaps best attain our object by showing, after the fashion of the scholastic divines, what genius is not, ere we proceed to inquire what it is.

Genius, then, first of all, is not mental dexterity. How many seem to think that it is! With how many people does the expert player of chess, and the acute solver of riddles, and the accurate summer up of intricate accounts, and the man of mere verbal memory (who has equally by heart Milton and Mallet), and the expert versifier, and the flippant declaimer, pass, each and all of them, for men of genius? One reason of this is, that this kind of power is so tangible in its effects; that only the external senses are required to perceive its results. It can neither be disputed nor denied. All are agreed about it. It needs no exertion of mind to form an opinion about its merit; and an opinion, when once formed, is rarely, if ever, altered. No circumstance can fritter away the character of the man who has only to open his mouth to pour forth puns and acrostics by the thousand. The merit, mean as it may be, is something positive and incontestable. Again, this sort of cleverness is habitual and inveterate: hence its displays are masterly and imposing: the thing is done, and done quickly, and as well as it is possible to conceive. The achievement, whatever it may be, has distinctness, prominence, and perfection. Perhaps mechanical were a better name than mental dexterity. Mechanism performs its wonders with unerring effect, and at all times equally. In given circumstances, the application of steam has, of course, the same result. So, set a man of this kind to write, and he writes, and writes well, but writes like an automaton. And yet the impression made by this kind of merit upon the majority is wonderful. A man of genius may go on for a lifetime digging wells of beauty and rapture, and one out of ten may talk about him, and one out of a hundred may read him, and one out of a thousand may partially understand him, and he may die unappreciated. But let one arise who can express commonplace in sounding phraseology, or work up weakness into epigram, or even disguise nonsense under copious and splendid verse, and he will be appreciated and admired as infallibly as any able mender of soles or stitcher of broad-cloth. Wordsworth (to translate principle into fact), during half his long lifetime, was neglected, while Waller is loaded and suffocated with panegyric. The reason is, Wordsworth is a poet, and Waller was a mechanist. It is easy distinguishing the characters. The mechanist has probably not one original thought

in his mind. He is perhaps even incapable of appreciating the original thoughts of others. It is to say much, if we grant that a "plastic stress," such as called in chaos, might perhaps stir him into the genuine animation of mind. As it is, he neither thinks nor dreams of thinking. Far from welcoming those impulses to deep and thrilling meditation, which more or less affect all intellects, he repulses them, and turns eagerly to his machinery. There, however, he is perfectly at home. He can handle his tools to admiration. He can throw off a poem, which, though not a "Paradise Lost," tickles the ear a great deal more, and is far more easily understood. He can dash down commonplaces on any given subject as fast as his pen can move. He can perhaps mimic all sorts of styles in succession with the skill of a mocking-bird. He can write a "Poetical Mirror," though a "Kilmeny" be beyond him. Nay, he can perhaps even shed off apparent and surface originalities as fast as the thistle its down: and he may be able to do all this, and much more, without the appearance of effort, at a moment's warning, and at all times equally. He is subject to no moods, no shadows, no sudden loathings of his occupation, no ambitious towering above the dead level of the paper on which he is inscribing his thoughts. His merit is thus great; and, what is more, is beyond all question. He has done all this; and no one doubts but he will do it again. Still his merit is very different from the merit of a man of genius. The man of genius cannot refrain from thinking. All impulses which affect him are so many summonses to vigorous intellectual exertion. His originality, never ostentatious, is nevertheless the element of his mind. He cannot stifle an inducement to thought, except it be for the sake of indulging in reverie, which is just thought in its nebular state. He cannot sacrifice sense to sound, except it be for an instant, that he may afterwards link both in unchanging harmony. He cannot complacently indite commonplace. He can write centos, but he will do so rarely, and only for the pleasure of gratifying his sympathy, by plunging more completely into another's habits of thought and feeling. He cannot, finally, do anything equally well at any time. It may be asked, why not? We reply, because he is a man, not a machine. He is not screwed up to a pitch whence he can only descend by a struggle. His brains move freely. The constant whirl supposed can only be produced by two causes: first, the result of mechanical straining, and, secondly, madness. He is neither mad nor a machine. It may be asked, Does not cultivation bring the powers to such perfection, that their fruit in any circumstances must be excellence? Most things, no doubt, are possible, and consistency of style may thus be secured even by men of impulse; but we believe that the highest pressure can rarely effect any more. Who more intensely cultivated than Milton? and yet who more dependent upon moods and moments? If nobody has written better, who has written worse? We are far, indeed, from denying that some men have great mechanical power added to their genius; and that it is better that they have. But such a conjunction is rare; and when it does occur, the mechanical part of the power ever appears to be subordinate. It must indeed have this appearance, else the man may deserve the name of a man of skill and tact, but never for a moment of a man of genius. And better want art entirely, than sacrifice to its shrine one atom of nature. Better, than that Apollo's locks be cropped and queued, that they be dashed and dishevelled by the hurricane. Mechanism has done much; it has often licked the rude offspring of genius into shape; dissipated the darkness that often shrouds the tabernacle of original thought; not only translated, but improved the productions of original genius. Still it must ever be kept separate and inferior.

Dexterity, then, or cleverness, is not genius. So neither is talent. By talent we understand the power of acute and metaphysical analysis. This is doubtless a nearer approximation to the *beau ideal* of power; and it is often found in waiting upon genius. It is just the mode of accounting for and substantiating the pro-

ducts of original thoughts. It is the art of rendering reasons for the intuitions of the poet. We may distinguish it from cleverness by saying, that cleverness is a mere cast from the features of original genius, while talent enters into the rationale of the painting, the adjustment of the proportions, and the quality of the colouring; attempting to explain and to sanction what has been executed only from a fine and original sense of the natural and the beautiful. Cleverness makes the parody, talent the dissertation and the review. Cleverness is generally acknowledged, talent is a deeper and stronger power, and may be as little appreciated as genius. Genius and talent are often combined. Newton had genius, and it gave him the thought of gravitation; but he had also talent, and he proved it. Had Newton died after the sublime conjecture, he had still been counted a man of genius, and his follower, who should have afterwards substantiated his assertion, would never have been placed above him, nor by his side. Thirdly, genius is not mere imagination. Nat Lee had probably as vivid impressions as those of any poet that ever lived, because his impressions were those of dreams or of madness. Such impressions have no ultimate end. They resemble separated shadows, with no body behind or before them. They suppose the dormancy of the reasoning faculty. They resemble the Northern Lights, which appear to flash and flicker in ragged confusion, as if they embraced earth by chance, not sunbeams, shed from a steadfast centre on an attendant and worshipping world. They are as incapable of being subordinated to the great purposes of thought or passion, as a madman's dreams of basing a moral or metaphysical system. They stand for themselves as distinctly as if they were bits of chaos. Imagination is doubtless essential to genius. Even although the man of genius be not born in its light, he must grow to meet it; but it cannot of itself constitute genius, as long as bedlam is not the temple of fame. Had Milton created only the "Limbo of Vanity," or the "Sin and Death," would he have had more reputation now than any manifest victim of inveterate nightmare?

Poetry must prove something ere it be good for much. Newton's error lay in not perceiving what the "Paradise Lost" did prove — in not perceiving the sublime moral lessons which are scattered over its every page. Perhaps no new principle is demonstrated in it; but every book cannot be expected to contain a principle like gravitation. It brings, however, a logic of its own—a testimony of fire to the great Christian doctrines and moralities. The character of Moloch is worth the whole work on "Fanaticism." In Satan, it is as if the hell of a thousand hearts, burning with pride and ambition, were disclosed. And, in Raphael, has not Milton represented the perfection of moral excellence, blended with the perfection of the affable and the tender—something softer than angel, and sublimer than man? And to the question, were it asked, What do Shakspere's works prove? we could as easily find a reply, for there is not one of them that is destitute of its deep and distinct moral. It may be asked, what does Falstaff prove? Why, it proves what rigid moralists are very apt to forget, that sensuality and selfishness may co-exist with much that is amiable. Who does not love Falstaff, and wish him a better man? But, again, for Timon's frantic misanthropy, we would have wanted the strong light cast on the character of the faithful Flavius. What finer moral than thus to wring from maddened misery a testimony to human worth and virtue? It is far better than Byron's sneering, reluctant, and sullen acknowledgment, that "virtue is no jest, and happiness no dream." And, for a final instance, think on Othello. Perhaps, as Coleridge holds, it is not jealousy that is dissected there; perhaps Othello's passion is just injured pride struggling to get rid of boundless and unutterable affection, by cutting the tie at once and for ever. Jealousy, indeed, supposes doubt. It is a transition state—a state of struggle when the elements of strong hope, and stronger fear, contend for mastery. Now Shakspere hurries over this point. Othello is very

soon convinced of Desdemona's worthlessness; and certainty is no more jealousy than despair is doubt. And Othello is as indignant as if a man were to find himself, by some monstrous means, in love with an object which he felt and knew to be despicable. It is this feeling which spurs him to the murder. He at once loves and contemns her. And the moral, therefore, lies in the vileness of the malignity which has driven him to this. All the blame is thus shifted on Iago. He collects the gloom of the whole passion of the play; and, to use an expression of Foster's, "the mind labours for a greater ability" of detesting him, and, in the fury of its hatred, regrets that his intellect has exalted him above the relief we should receive from equally despising him. Thus it appears that all great works of genius have a moral and a meaning, while mere imagination may be found disconnected from both.

Fourthly, the mere expression of passion is not genius. Genius, indeed, includes passion. But it is not identical with strong passion, nor with its expression; else every man that could swear were a man of genius, and the blackguard and the bully might set up claims to the title. It is true, that passion lifts even the low into something like genius; in other words, rouses them to express their feelings in the language of imagination. We have heard a very competent judge declare, that the most powerful eloquence he ever heard was that of an insulted carter. But, in general, passion finds its vulgar vent in mere gesticulation or blasphemy. Burns does not thus inveigh. Nor does Timon. His curses have oracular dignity and grandeur. The dark pages of his passion are laid before us in the light of imagination. We do not recollect a more striking example of the distinctions we are drawing, than the difference between Titus Andronicus and Lear. In the one, a man is outraged, and his complaints have passion, but no poetry. In the other, the injured old man appeals to the heavens to avenge his cause, "as they themselves are old." He erects, on the basis of his wrong, a majestic morality—he ascends, on the ladder of madness, the highest heaven of invention. In the one, passion stands alone; in the other, it is linked to imagination and morality; it agitates the whole being like an earthquake; it does not hurry, with selfish instinct, to that mode of expression which shall soonest relieve its paroxysms and its pangs, but accumulates and intensifies till it passes into a solemn joy.

Ere now proceeding to say what genius is, we may, in order to narrow the ground a little more, mention some things which, though never said to be genius, are yet, somehow, thought to be necessarily connected with it. Genius is not necessarily connected with taste. This, perhaps, requires no proof; for if by taste is meant a keen sense of minute delicacies and beauties, then a thousand instances of acknowledged genius will occur where this is wanting. Although, if by taste we mean the feeling connected with the operations of genius, then, as it obviously springs from the power, whatever it be, it may, at least in our imaginations, be identified with it. Nor is genius necessarily connected with judgment; or, in other words, with an intense perception and avoidance of the bad and the absurd. The author of "Lear" wrote "Love's Labour's Lost," and had, very likely, far less feeling of the inferiority of the latter than other men. Wordsworth never could perceive the inanity of a few of the "Lyrical Ballads." Genius is not necessarily connected with any particular kind of intellectual thought, far less with any mechanical mode of expressing that thought—that is to say, a man with the essential elements of genius may write in verse or in prose. Genius is not necessarily connected with the moral nature. It has, indeed, been described, by a high authority, as "steeped and saturated in the moral nature." If facts could be forgotten, these words might pass for true, as well as beautiful. These, however, we fear, only teach us that instances of *gross* disconnection are rare. But the existence of even a few such cases destroys the idea of necessary connection. Was Rousseau's

genius "steeped and saturated" in the moral nature, or Voltaire's, or Byron's? It would be very easy to deny these men's claims to genius, but not so easy to convince us, that the denial was anything else than an interested impertinence. With Heart we hold genius to be inseparably united, but Heart is only one element in the moral nature. Genius, then, if we may hazard a definition, is natural or original thought invested with the power of passion, and expressed in the language of the imagination. It is just the highest power of reason, added to the force of imagination and passion. We have thus three results secured, which are actually those of genius: first, truth, or originality of thought; secondly, impulsive power; and, thirdly, a peculiar diction. First, originality of thought. The thought, however, must not only be new, but of such importance as to stir the surges of passion. It must also be true—that is, consistent with nature—else it is mere fancy. The second element is passion. Genius moves, as well as makes. All passion, more or less, moves, and genius is a stronger breath, doubling the agitation. The last element, and that which colours its language, is imagination. Without it, thought, unless of an inferior quality, could not adequately express itself. All great thought links itself instantaneously to imagery, and imagery, as we have seen already, is the life of passion. Genius thus appears to be the joint product of three elements, different, but intimately connected. And these exhaust the depth and the power of the human spirit.

Our readers will be able, after reading what follows, to see how far we think Macaulay to answer to this definition of genius.

The two most popular of British authors are, at present, Charles Dickens and Thomas Macaulay. The supremacy of the former is verily one of the signs of the times. He has no massive or profound intellect — no lore superior to a schoolboy's—no vast or creative imagination — little philosophic insight, little power of serious writing, and little sympathy with either the subtler and profounder parts of man, or with the grander features of Nature (witness his description of Niagara—he would have painted the next pump better!); and yet, through his simplicity and sincerity, his boundless *bonhommie*, his fantastic humour, his sympathy with every-day life, and his absolute and unique dominion over every region of the Odd, he has obtained a popularity which Shakspere nor hardly Scott in their lifetime enjoyed. He is ruling over us like a Fairy King or Prince Prettyman—strong men as well as weak yielding to the glamour of his tiny rod. Louis XIV. walked so erect, and was so perfect in the management of his person, that people mistook his very size, and it was not discovered till after his death that he was a little, and not a large man. So many of the admirers of Dickens have been so dazzled by the elegance of his proportions, the fairy beauty of his features, the minute grace of his motions, and the small sweet smile which plays about his mouth, that they have imagined "Bonnie Prince Charlie" to be a Scott, or even a Shakspere. They will discover their mistake by and by!

In a different region, and on a higher and haughtier seat, is Thomas Macaulay exalted. In general literature, as Dickens in fiction, is he held to be *facile princeps*. He is, besides, esteemed a rhetorician of a high class—a statesman of no ordinary calibre—a lyrical poet of much mark and likelihood — a scholar ripe and good — and, mounted on this high pedestal, he "has purposed in his heart to take another step," and to snatch from the hand of the Historic Muse one of her richest laurels. To one so gifted in the prodigality of Heaven, can we approach in any other attitude than that of prostration? or dare we hope for sympathy, while we proceed to make him the subject of free and fearless criticism?

Before proceeding to consider his separate claims upon public admiration, we will sum up, in a few sentences, our impressions of his general character. He is a gifted, but not a great man. He is a rhetorician, without being an orator. He is endowed with great powers of percep-

tion and acquisition, but with no power of origination. He has deep sympathies with genius, without possessing genius of the highest order itself. He is strong and broad, but not subtle or profound. He is not more destitute of original genius, than he is of high principle and purpose. He has all common faculties developed in a large measure, and cultivated to an intense degree. What he wants is the gift that cannot be given—the power that cannot be counterfeited—the wind that bloweth where it listeth—the vision, the joy, and the sorrow, with which no stranger intermeddleth—the flight which never was on sea or shore—the consecration and the poet's dream."

To such gifts, indeed, he scarcely pretends. To roll the raptures of poetry, without emulating its *speciosa miracula* —to write worthily of heroes, without aspiring to the heroic—to write history, without enacting it—to furnish to the utmost degree his own mind, without leading the minds of others one point farther than to the admiration of himself and of his idols, seems, after all, to have been the main object of his ambition, and has already been nearly satisfied. He has played the finite game of talent, and not the infinite game of genius. His goal has been the top of the mountain, and not the blue profound beyond; and on the point he has sought he may speedily be seen, relieved against the heights which he cannot reach—a marble fixture, exalted and motionless. Talent stretching itself out to attain the attitudes and exaltation of genius, is a pitiable and painful position, but it is not that of Macaulay. With piercing sagacity he has, from the first, discerned his proper intellectual powers, and sought, with his whole heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, to cultivate them. "Macaulay the Lucky," he has been called; he ought rather to have been called Macaulay the Wise.

With a rare combination of the arts of age and the fire of youth, the sagacity of the worldling and the enthusiasm of the scholar, he has sought self-development as his principal, if not only end.

He is a gifted, but not a great man. He possesses all those ornaments, accomplishments, and even natural endowments, which the great man requires for the full emphasis and effect of his power (and which the *greatest* alone can entirely dispense with), but the power does not fill, possess, and shake the drapery. The lamps are lit in gorgeous effulgence; the shrine is modestly, yet magnificently adorned; there is everything to tempt a god to descend; but the god descends not —or, if he does, it is only Maia's son, the Eloquent, and not Jupiter, the Thunderer. The distinction between the merely gifted and the great is, we think, this—the gifted adore greatness and the great; the great worship the infinite, the eternal, and the god-like. The gifted gaze at the moon-like reflections of the Divine; the great, with open face, look at its naked sun, and each look is the principle and prophecy of an action.

He has profound sympathies with genius, without possessing genius of the highest order itself. Genius, indeed, is his intellectual god. It is (contrary to a common opinion) not genius that Thomas Carlyle worships. The word genius he seldom uses, in writing or in conversation, except in derision. We can conceive a savage cachinnation at the question, if he thought Cromwell or Danton a great genius. It is energy in earnest that he so much admires. With genius, as existing almost undiluted in the person of such men as Keats, he cannot away. It seems to him only a long swoon or St Vitus's dance. It is otherwise with Macaulay. If we trace him throughout all his writings, we will find him watching for genius with as much care and fondness as a lover uses in following the footsteps of his mistress. This, like a golden ray, has conducted him across all the wastes and wildernesses of history. It has brightened to his eye each musty page and worm-eaten volume. Each morning has he risen exulting to renew the search; and he is never half so eloquent as when dwelling on the achievements of genius, as sincerely and rapturously as if he were reciting his own. His sympathies are as wide as they are keen. Genius, whether

thundering with Chatham in the House of Lords, or mending kettles and dreaming dreams with Bunyan in Elstowe; whether sitting in the saloons of Holland House with De Stael and Byron, or driven from men as on a new Nebuchadnezzar whirlwind, in the person of poor wandering Shelley; whether in Coleridge,

"With soul as strong as a mountain river,
Pouring out praise to the almighty Giver,"

or in Voltaire, shedding its withering smile across the universe, like the grin of death; whether singing in Milton's verse, or glittering upon Cromwell's sword—is the only magnet which can draw forth all the riches of his mind, and the presence of inspiration alone makes him inspired.

But this sympathy with genius does not amount to very high genius itself; it is too catholic and too prostrate. The man of the highest order of genius, after the enthusiasm of youth is spent, is rarely its worshipper, even as it exists in himself. He worships rather the object which genius contemplates, and the ideal at which it aims. He is rapt up to a higher region, and hears a mightier voice. Listening to the melodies of Nature, to the march of the eternal hours, to the severe music of continuous thought, to the rush of his own advancing soul, he cannot so complacently bend an ear to the minstrelsies, however sweet, of men, however gifted. He passes, like the true painter, from the admiration of copies, which he may admire to error and extravagance, to that great original which, without blame, excites an infinite and endless devotion. He becomes a personification of Art, standing on tiptoe in contemplation of mightier Nature, and drawing from her features with trembling pencil and a joyful awe. Macaulay has not this direct and personal communication with the truth and the glory of things. He sees the universe, not in its own rich and divine radiance, but in the reflected light which poets have shed upon it. There are in his writings no oracular deliverances, no pregnant hints, no bits of intense meaning—broken, but broken off from some supernal circle of thought—no momentary splendours, like flashes of midnight lightning, revealing how much—no thoughts beckoning us away with silent finger, like ghosts, into dim and viewless regions—and he never even nears that divine darkness which sometimes edges the widest and loftiest excursions of imagination and of reason. His style and manner may be compared to crystal, but not to the "terrible crystal" of the prophets and apostles of literature. There is the sea of glass, but it is not mingled with fire, or at least the fire has not been heated seven times, nor has it descended from the seventh heaven.

Consequently, he has no power of origination. We despise the charge of plagiarism, in its low and base sense, which has sometimes been advanced against him. He never commits conscious theft, though sometimes he gives all a father's welcome to thoughts to which he has not a father's claim. But the rose which he appropriates is seldom more than worthy of the breast which it is to adorn: thus, in borrowing from Hall the antithesis applied by the one to the men of the French Revolution, and by the other to the restored royalists in the time of Charles II., "dwarfish virtues and gigantic crimes," he has taken what he might have lent, and, in its application, has changed it from a party calumny into a striking truth. The men of the Revolution were not men of dwarfish virtues and gigantic vices; both were stupendous when either were possessed: it was otherwise with the minions of Charles. But, without re-arguing the question of originality, that quality is manifestly not his. It were as true that he originated Milton, Dryden, Bacon, or Byron, as that he originated the views which his articles develop of their lives or genius. A search after originality is never successful. Novelty is even shyer than truth, for, if you search after the true, you will often, if not always, find the new; but, if you search after the new, you will, in all probability, find neither the new nor the true. In seeking for paradoxes, Macaulay sometimes stumbles on, but more frequently stumbles over, truth. His essays are masterly treatises,

written learnedly, carefully conned, and pronounced in a tone of perfect assurance; the Pythian pantings, the abrupt and stammering utterances of the seer, are awanting.

In connection with this defect, we find in him little metaphysical gift or tendency. There is no "speculation in his eye." If the mysterious regions of thought, which are at present attracting so many thinkers, have ever possessed any charm for him, that charm has long since passed away. If the "weight, the burden, and the mystery of all this unintelligible world" have ever pressed him to anguish, that anguish seems now forgotten as a nightmare of his youth. The serpents which strangle other Laocoons, or else keep them battling all their life before high heaven, have long ago left, if indeed they had ever approached, him. His joys and sorrows, sympathies and inquiries, are entirely of the "earth, earthy," though it is an earth beautified by the smile of genius, and by the midnight sun of the past. It may appear presumptuous to criticise his creed, where not an article has been by himself indicated, but we see about him neither the firm grasp of one who holds a dogmatic certainty, nor the vast and vacant stretch of one who has failed after much effort to find the object, and who says, "I clasp—what is it that I clasp?" Toward the silent and twilight lands of thought, where reside, half in glimmer, and half in gloom, the dread questions of the origin of evil, the destiny of man, our relation to the lower animals and to the spirit world, he never seems to have been powerfully or for any length of time impelled. We might ask at him the question which a reviewer asked at Carlyle, "Can you tell us, quite in confidence, your private opinion as to the place where wicked people go?" And, besides, what think you of God? or of that most profound and awful mystery of godliness? Have you ever thought deeply on such subjects at all? Or, if so, why does the language of a cold conventionalism, or of an unmeaning fervour, distinguish all your allusions to them? It was not, indeed, your business to *write* on such themes, but it requires no more a wizard to determine from your writings whether you have adequately *thought* on them, than to tell from a man's eye whether he is or is not looking at the sun.

We charge Macaulay, as well as Dickens, with a systematic shrinking from meeting in a manful style those dread topics and relations at which we have hinted; and this, whether it springs, as Humboldt says in his own case, from a want of subjective understanding, or whether it springs from a regard for, or fear of, popular opinion, or whether it springs from moral indifference, argues, on the first supposition, a deep mental deficiency, on the second, a cowardice unworthy of their position, or, on the third, a state of spirit which the age, in its professed teachers, will not much longer endure. An earnest period, bent on basing its future progress upon fixed principles, fairly and irrevocably set down to solve the problem of its happiness and destiny, will not long refrain from bestowing the name of brilliant trifler on the man, however gifted and favoured, who so slenderly sympathises with it in this high though difficult calling.

It follows almost as a necessity from these remarks, that Macaulay exhibits no high purpose. Seldom have so much energy and eloquence been more entirely divorced from a great uniting and consecrating object; and in his forthcoming "History" we fear that this deficiency will be glaringly manifest. History, without the presence of high purpose, is but a series of dissolving views—as brilliant, it may be, but as disconnected, and not so impressive. It is this, on the contrary, that gives so profound an interest to the writings of Arnold, and invests his very fragments with a certain air of greatness; each sentence seems given in on oath. It is this which glorifies even D'Aubigne's Romance of the Reformation, for he *seeks* at least to show God in history, like a golden thread, pervading, uniting, explaining, and purifying it all. No such passion for truth as Arnold's, no such steady vision of those great outshining laws of justice, mercy, and retribution, which pervade all human story, as D'Au-

bigne's, and in a far higher degree, as Carlyle's, do we expect realised in Macaulay. His "History," in all likelihood, will be the splendid cenotaph of his party. It will be brilliant in parts—curiously and minutely learned—written now with elaborate pomp, and now with elaborate negligence—heated by party spirit whenever the fires of enthusiasm begin to pale; it will abound in striking literary and personal sketches, and will easily rise to and above the level of the scenes it describes, just because few of those scenes, from the character of the period, are of the highest moral interest or grandeur. But a history forming a transcript, as if in the shorthand of a superior being, of the leading events of the age, solemn in spirit, subdued in tone, grave and testamentary in language, profound in insight, judicial in impartiality, and final as a Median law in effect, we shall not receive at the hand of Macaulay.*

"Broader and deeper," says Emerson, "must we write our annals." The true idea of history is only as yet dawning on the world; the old almanack form of history has been generally renounced, but much of the old almanack spirit remains. The avowed partisan still presumes to write his special pleading, and to call it a history. The romance writer still decorates his fancy-piece, and, for fear of mistake, writes under it, "this is a history." The bald retailer of the dry bones of history is not yet entirely banished from our literature; nor is the hardy, but one-sided iconoclast, who has a quarrel with all established reputation, and would underrate the sun if he could; nor is the sagacious philosophiste, who has access to the inner thoughts and motives of men who have been dead for centuries, and often imputes to deep deliberate purpose what was the result of momentary impulse, fresh and sudden as the breeze, who accurately sums up and ably reasons on all calculable principles, but omits the incalculable, such as inspiration and frenzy. We are waiting for the full avatar of the ideal historian, who, to the intellectual qualities of clear sight, sagacity, picturesque power, and learning, shall add the far rarer qualities of a love for truth only equalled by a love for man—a belief in and sympathy with progress, thorough independence and impartiality, and an all-embracing charity—and after Macaulay's "History of England" has seen the light, are still found waiting.

* This work has since appeared. How far it justifies our prophecy, its candid readers will judge.

The real purpose of a writer is perhaps best concluded from the effect he produces on the minds of his readers. And what is the boon which Macaulay's writings do actually confer upon their millions of readers? Much information, doubtless—many ingenious views are given and developed; but the main effect is pleasure—either a lulling, soothing opiatic, or a rousing and stimulating gratification. But what is their mental or moral influence? What new and great truths do they throw like bombshells into nascent spirits, disturbing for ever their repose? What sense of the moral sublime have they ever infused into the imagination, or what thrilling and strange joy "beyond the name of pleasure" have they ever circulated through the heart? What long, deep trains of thought have his thoughts ever started, and to what melodies in other minds have his words struck the key-note? Some authors mentally "beget children—they travail in birth with children;" thus from Coleridge sprang Hazlitt; but who is Macaulay's eldest born? Who dates any great era in his history from the reading of his works, or has received from him even the bright edge of any Apocalyptic revelation? Pleasure, we repeat, is the principal boon he has conferred on the age; and, without under-estimating this (which, indeed, were ungrateful, for none have derived more pleasure from him than ourselves), we must say that it is comparatively a trivial gift—a fruiterer's or a confectioner's office—and, moreover, that the pleasure he gives, like that arising from the use of wine, or from the practice of novel-reading, requires to be imbibed in great moderation, and needs a robust constitution to bear it. Reading his papers is employment but

too delicious—the mind is too seldom irritated and provoked—the higher faculties are too seldom appealed to—the sense of the infinite is never given; there is perpetual excitement, but it is that of a game of tennisball, and not the Titanic play of rocks and mountains; there is constant exercise, but it is rather the swing of an easy-chair, than the grasp and tug of a strong rower striving to keep time with one stronger than himself. Ought, we ask, a grave and solid reputation, as extensive as that of Shakspere or Milton, to be entirely founded on what is essentially a course of light reading?

We do not venture on his merits as a politician or statesman; but, as a speaker, we humbly think he has been overrated. He is not a sublime orator, who fulminates, and fiercely and almost contemptuously sways his audience; he is not a subtle declaimer, who winds around and within the sympathies of his hearers, till, like the damsel in the "Castle of Indolence," they weaken as they warm, and are at last sighingly but luxuriously lost; he is not a being piercing a lonely way for his own mind through the thick of his audience—wondered at, looked after, but not followed—dwelling apart from them even while riveting them to his lips; still less is he an incarnation of moral dignity, whose slightest sentence is true to the inmost soul of honour, and whose plain blunt speech is as much better than oratory, as oratory is better than rhetoric. He is the primed mouthpiece of an elaborate discharge, who presents, applies the linstock, and fires off. He speaks rather before than to his audience. We felt this strongly when hearing him at the opening of the New Philosophical Institution in Edinburgh; that appearance had on us the effect of disenchantment. Our lofty idea of Macaulay the orator—an idea founded on the perusal of all sorts of fulsome panegyrics—sank like a dream. Macaulay the orator! Why had they not raved as well of Macaulay the stately and tall? He is, indeed, a master of rhetorical display; he aspires to be a philosopher; he is a brilliant *litterateur;* but, besides not speaking oratorically, he does not speak at all, if speaking means free communication with the souls and hearts of his hearers. If Demosthenes, Fox, and O'Connell were orators, he is none. It was not merely that we were disappointed with his personal appearance—that is sturdy and manlike, if not graceful; but the speech was an elaborate and ungraceful accommodation to the presumed prejudices and tastes of the hearers—a piece of literary electioneering; and the manner, in its fluent monotony, showed a heart untouched amid all the palaver. Here is one, we thought, whose very tones prove that his success has been far too easy and exulting, and who has never known by experience the meaning of the grand old words, "perfect through suffering." Here is one in public sight selling his birth-right for a mess of pottage and worthless praise, and who may live bitterly to rue the senseless bargain, for that applause is as certainly insincere as that birth-right is high. Here is one who, ingloriously sinking with compulsion and laborious flight, consciously confounds culture with mere knowledge—speaking as if a boarding-school Miss, who had read Ewing's Geography, were therein superior to Strabo. There, Thomas Macaulay, we thought, thou art contradicting thy former and better self, for we well remember thee speaking in an article with withering contempt of those who prefer to that "fine old geography of Strabo" the pompous inanities of Pinkerton. And dost thou deem thyself, all-accomplished as thou art, nearer to the infinite mind than Pythagoras or Plato, because thou knowest more? And when he spoke again extempore, he sounded a still lower deep, and we began almost to fancy that there must be some natural deficiency in a mind so intensely cultivated, which could not shake as good, or better speeches, than even his first "out of his sleeve." But the other proceedings and haranguings of that evening were not certainly fitted to eclipse his brightness, though they *were* calculated, in the opinion of many, to drive the truly eloquent to the woods, to find in the old trees a more congenial audience.

The House of Commons, we are told, was

wont to hush to hear him; but this might arise from other reasons than the mere power of his eloquence. He had a name, and there is far too much even in Parliament of that base parasitical element, which, while denying ordinary courtesy to the untried, has its knee delicately hinged, to bend in supple homage to the acknowledged. He avoided, again, the utterance of all extreme opinions, never startled or offended, never shot abroad forked flashes of truth; and, besides, his speaking was, in its way, a very peculiar treat. Like his articles, it generally gave pleasure; and who can deny themselves an opportunity of being pleased? Therefore the House was silent; its perpetual undersong subsided; even Roebuck's bristles were wont to lower, and Joseph Hume's careful front to relax, when the right honourable member for Edinburgh was on his legs. But *he* is, in our idea, the orator who fronts the storm and crushes it into silence—who snatches the prejudice from three hundred frowning foreheads, and binds it as a crown unto him—and who, not on some other and less difficult arena, but on that very field, wins the laurels which he is to wear. Those are the eloquent sentences which, though hardly heard above the tempest of opposition, yet are heard, and felt as well as heard, and obeyed as well as felt, which bespeak the surges at their loudest, and immediately there is a great calm.

We are compelled, therefore, as our last general remark on Macaulay, to call him rather a large and broad, than a subtle, sincere, or profound spirit. A simple child of Nature, trembling before the air played by some invisible musician behind him—what picture could be more exactly his antithesis? But neither has he, in any high degree, either the gift of philosophic analysis, or the idealising power of the poet. Clear, direct, uncircumspective thought—vivid vision of the characters he describes—an eye to see, rather than an imagination to combine—strong, but subdued enthusiasm—learning of a wide range, and information still more wonderful in its minuteness and accuracy—a style limited and circumscribed by mannerism, but having all power and richness possible within its own range, full of force, though void of freedom—and a tone of conscious mastery, in his treatment of every subject, are some of the qualities which build him up, a strong and thoroughly furnished man, fit surely for more massive deeds than either a series of sparkling essays or a one-sided history.

In passing from his general characteristics to his particular works, there is one circumstance in favour of the critic. While many authors are much, their writings are little known; but if ever any writings were published, it is Macaulay's. A glare of publicity, as wide almost as the sunshine of the globe, rests upon them; and it is always easier to speak to men of what they know perfectly, than of what they know in part. To this there is perhaps an exception in his contributions to "Knight's Quarterly Magazine." That periodical, some of our readers may be aware, was of limited circulation and limited life. Yet Professor Wilson has been known to say, that its four or five volumes are equal in talent to any four or five in the compass of periodical literature. To this opinion we must respectfully demur; at least we found the reading of two or three of them rather a hard task, the sole relief being in the papers of Macaulay, and would be disposed to prefer an equal number of "Blackwood," "Tait," or the old "London Magazine."

Macaulay's best contributions to this are a series of poems, entitled "Lays of the Roundheads." These, though less known than his "Lays of the League," which also appeared in "Knight," are, we think, superior. They are fine anticipations of the "Lays of Ancient Rome." Like Scott, vaulting between Claverhouse and Burley, and entering with equal gusto into the souls of both, Macaulay sings with equal spirit the song of the enthusiastic Cavalier and that of the stern Roundhead. He could have acted as poet-laureate to Hannibal as well as to the Republic, and his "Lays of Carthage" would have been as sweet, as strong, and

more pathetic than his "Lays of Rome." "How happy could he be with either, were t'other dear charmer away." He would have passed from a "Life of Cromwell" to a panegyric on the "Man of Blood," whose eyes "*could bear to look on torture, but durst not look on war*," sympathising as he does more with the poetry than with the principles of the great Puritanic contest.

His "Roman Lays," though of a later date, fall naturally under the same category of consideration. These, when published, took the majority of the public by surprise, who were nearly as astonished at this late flowering of poetry in the celebrated critic, as were the Edinburgh people, more recently, at the portentous tidings that Patrick Robertson, also, was among the poets. The initiated, however, acquainted with his previous effusions, hailed the phenomenon (not, as in Patrick's case, with shouts of spurting laughter), but with bursts of applause, which the general voice more than confirmed. The day when the "Lays" appeared, though deep in autumn, seemed a belated dog-day, so frantic did their admirers become. Homer, Scott, Wordsworth, and Byron, were now to hide their diminished heads, for an old friend under a new face had arisen to eclipse them all. And, for martial spirit, we are free to confess the "Lays" have never been surpassed, save by Homer, Scott, and by Burns, whose one epithet, "red wat shod," whose one description of the dying Scotch soldier in the "Earnest Cry," and whose one song, "Go fetch for me a pint of wine," are enough to stamp him among the foremost of martial poets. Written, it is said, in the War-Office, the Genius of Battle might be figured bending over the author, sternly smiling on her *last* poet, and shedding from her wings a ruddy light upon its rapidly and furiously-filling page. But the poetry of war is not of the highest order. Seldom, except when the war is ennobled by some great cause, as when Deborah uttered her unequalled thanksgiving, can the touch of the sword extract the richest life's-blood of poetry. As it is, the gulf between the "Lays"—amazingly spirited though they be—and intellectual, imaginative, or moral poetry, is nearly as wide as between "Chevy Chase" and "Laodamia." Besides, the "Lays" are in a great measure centos; the images are no more original than the facts, and the poetic effect is produced through the singular rapidity, energy, and felicity of the narration, and the breathless rush of the verse, "which rings to boot and saddle." One of the finest touches, for example, is imitated from Scott:—

> "The kites know well the long stern swell
> That bids the Romans close"

Macaulay has it. In the "Lady of the Lake" it is—

> "The exulting eagle scream'd afar,
> She knew the voice of Alpine's war."

Indeed, no part of the "Lays" rises higher than the better passages of Scott. As a whole, they are more imitative and less rich in figure and language than his poetry; and we have been unable to discover any powers revealed in them which his prose works had not previously and amply disclosed. In fact, their excessive popularity arose in a great measure from the new attitude in which they presented their writer. Long accustomed to speak to the public, he suddenly volunteered to sing, and his song was harmonious, and, between gratitude and surprise, was vehemently encored. It was as if Helen Faucit were to commence to lecture, and should lecture well; or as though Douglas Jerrold were to announce a volume of sermons, and the sermons turn out to be excellent. This, after all, would only prove versatility of talent; it would not enlarge our conception of the real calibre of their powers. Nay, we hesitate not to assert that certain passages of Macaulay's prose rise higher than the finest raptures of his poetry, and that the term eloquence will measure the loftiest reaches of either.

This brings us to say a few words on his contributions to the "Edinburgh Review." We confess that, had we been called on while new from reading those productions, our verdict on them would have been much more enthusiastic. Their

immediate effect is absolutely intoxicating. Each reads like a new Waverley tale. "More—give us more—it is divine!" we cry, like the Cyclops, when he tasted of the wine of Outis. As Pitt adjourned the court after Sheridan's Begum speech, so, in order to judge fairly, we are compelled to adjourn the criticism. Days even have to elapse ere the stern question begins slowly to lift up its head —"What have you gained? Have you only risen from a more refined 'Noctes Ambrosianæ?' Have you only been conversing with an elegant artist? or has a prophet been detaining you in his terrible grasp? or has Apollo been touching your trembling ears?" As we answer, we almost blush, remembering our tame and sweet subjection; and yet, the moment that the enchantment again assails us, it again is certain to prevail.

But what is the explanation of this power? Is it altogether magical, or does it admit of analysis? Macaulay's writings have one very peculiar and very popular quality. They are eminently clear. You can read them as you run. Schoolboys devour them with as much zest as bearded men. *This* clearness is, we think, connected with deficiency in his speculative and imaginative faculties; but it does not so appear to the majority of readers. Walking in an even and distinct pathway, not one stumbling-stone or alley of gloom in its whole course, no Hill of Difficulty rising, nor Path of Danger diverging, greeted, too, by endless vistas of interest and beauty, all are but too glad, and too grateful, to get so trippingly along. Vanity, also, whispers to the more ambitious—"What we can so easily understand, we could easily equal;" and thus are the readers kept on happy terms both with the author and themselves. His writings have all the stimulus of oracular decision, without one particle of oracular darkness. His papers, too, are thickly studded with facts. This itself, in an age like ours, is enough to recommend them, especially when these facts are so carefully selected—when told now with emphasis so striking, and now with negligence so graceful; and when suspended around a theory, at once dazzling and slight—at once paradoxical and pleasing. The reader, beguiled, believes himself reading something more agreeable than history, and more veracious than fiction. It is a very waltz of facts that he witnesses; and yet how consoling to reflect that they are facts, after all! Again, Macaulay, as we have repeatedly hinted, is given to paradoxes. But then these paradoxes are so harmless, so respectable, so well-behaved—his originalities are so orthodox, and his mode of expressing them is at once so strong and so measured—that people feel both the tickling sensation of novelty, and a perfect sense of safety, and are slow to admit that the author, instead of being a bold, is a timorous thinker, one of the literary as well as political *juste-milieu*. Again, his manner and style are thoroughly English. As his sympathies are, to a great degree, with English modes of thought and habits of action, so his language is a stream of English undefiled. All the territories which it has traversed have enriched, without colouring, its waters. Even the most valuable of German refinements—such as that common one of subjective and objective—are sternly shied. Scarcely a phrase or word is introduced which Swift would not have sanctioned. In anxiety to avoid a barbarous and Mosaic diction, he goes to the other extreme, and practises purism and elaborate simplicity. Perhaps, under a weightier burden, such a style might break down; but, as it is, it floats on, and carries the reader with it, in all safety, rapidity, and ease. Again, this writer has—apart from his clearness, his bridled paradox, and his English style—a power of interesting his readers which we may call, for want of a more definite term, tact. This art he has taught himself gradually; for in his earlier articles, such as that on "Milton" and the "Present Administration," there were a prodigality and a recklessness—a prodigality of image and a recklessness of statement—which argued an impulsive nature, not likely so soon to subside into that of a tactician. Long ago, however, is all this over. Now he can set his ela-

borate passages at proper distances from each other; he peppers his page more sparingly with the condiments of metaphor and image; he interposes anecdotes to break the blaze of his splendour; he consciously stands at ease, nay, condescends to nod, the better to prepare his reader, and breathe himself for a grand gallop; and, though he has not the art to conceal his art, yet he has the skill always to fix his reader—always to write, as he himself says of Horace Walpole, "what everybody will like to read." Still further, and finally, he has a quality different from and superior to all these—he has genuine literary enthusiasm, which public life has not yet been able to chill. He is not an inspired child, but he is still an ardent schoolboy; and what many count and call his vice, we count his salvation. It is this unfeigned love of letters and genius which (dexterously managed, indeed) is the animating and inspiring element of Macaulay's better criticisms, and the redeeming point in his worse.

We must be permitted, ere we close, a few remarks on some of his leading papers. "Milton" was his "Reuben—his firstborn—the beginning of his strength," and thought by many "the excellency of dignity, and the excellency of power." It was gorgeous as an eastern tale. He threw such a glare about Milton, that at times you could not see him. The article came clashing down on the floor of our literature like a gauntlet of defiance, and all wondered what young Titan could have launched it. Many inquired, "Starting at such a rate, whither is he likely to go?" Meanwhile, the wiser, while admiring, quietly smiled, and whispered, in reply, "At such a rate no man can or ought to advance." Meanwhile, too, a tribute to Milton from across the waters, less brilliant, but springing from a more complete and mellow sympathy with him, though at first overpowered, began steadily and slowly to gain the superior suffrage of the age, and from that pride of place has not yet receded. On the contrary, Macaulay's paper he himself now treats as the brilliant bastard of his mind. Of such *splendida vitia* he need not be ashamed. We linger as we remember the wild delight with which we first read his picture of the Puritans, ere it was hackneyed by quotation. How burning his print of Dante! The best frontispiece to this paper on "Milton" would be the figure of Robert Hall, at the age of sixty, lying on his back, and learning Italian, in order to verify Macaulay's description of the "man that had been in hell."

In what a different light does the review of Croker's "Boswell" exhibit our author! He sets out, like Graves to Shenstone, by saying, "I will, I will be witty;" and, as in that case, the will and the power are equal. Macaulay's wit is always sarcasm—sarcasm embittered by indignation, and yet performing its minute dissections with judicial gravity. *Here* he catches *his* Rhadamanthus of the Shades in the upper air of literature, and his vengeance is more ferocious than his wont. He first flays, then kills, then tramples, and then hangs his victim in chains. It is the onset of one whose time is short, and who expects reprisals in another region. Nor will his sarcastic vein, once awakened against Croker, sleep till it has scorched poor Bozzy to ashes, and even singed the awful wig of Johnson. We cannot comprehend Macaulay's fury at Boswell, whom he crushes with a most disproportionate expenditure of power and anger. Nor can we coincide with his eloquent enforcement of the opinion, first propounded by Burke, then seconded by Mackintosh, and which seems to have become general, that Johnson is greater in Boswell's book than in his own works. To this we demur. Boswell's book gives us little idea of Johnson's eloquence or power of grappling with higher subjects; "Rasselas" and the "Lives of the Poets" do. Boswell's book does justice to Johnson's wit, readiness, and fertility; but, if we could see the full force of his fancy, the full energy of his invective, and his full sensibility to, and command over, the moral sublime, we must consult such papers in the "Idler" as that wonderful one on the Vultures, or in the "Rambler,"

as "Anningate and Ajut," his "London," and his "Vanity of Human Wishes." Boswell, we venture to assert, has not saved one *great* sentence or thought of his idol—such as we may find profusely scattered in his own writings—nor has recorded fully any of those conversations in which, pitted against Parr or Burke, he talked his best. If Macaulay merely means that Boswell, through what he has preserved, and through his own unceasing admiration, gives us a higher conception of Johnson's every-day powers of mind than his writings supply, he is right; but, in expressly claiming the immortality for the "careless table-talk," which he denies to the works, and forgetting that the works discover higher faculties in special display, we deem him mistaken.

In attacking Johnson's style, Macaulay is, unconsciously, a suicide; not that his style is modelled upon Johnson's, or that he abounds in his peculiar verbiage—he has never needed large or new words, either to cloak up mere commonplace, or to express absolute originality—but many of the faults he charges against Johnson belong to himself. Uniformity of march—want of flexibility and ease—consequent difficulty in adapting itself to common subjects—perpetual and artfully balanced antithesis—were, at any rate, once peculiarities of Macaulay's writing, as well as of Johnson's, nor are they yet entirely relinquished. After all, such faults are only the awkward steps of the elephant which only the monkey can deride

The article on Byron, for light and sparkling brilliance, is Macaulay's finest paper. Perhaps it is not sufficiently grave or profound for the subject. There are, we think, but two modes of properly writing about Byron—the one is the Monody, the other the Impeachment: this paper is neither. Mere criticism over such dread dust is impertinent; mere panegyric impossible. Either with condemnation melting down in irrepressible tears, or with tears drying up in strong censure, should we approach the memory of Byron—if, indeed, eternal silence were not better still.

Over one little paper we are apt to pause with a peculiar fondness—the paper on Bunyan. As no one has greater sympathy with the spirit of the Puritans, without having any with their peculiar sentiments, than Carlyle, so no one sympathises more with the literature of that period, without much else in common, than Macaulay. The "Pilgrim's Progress" is to him, as to many, almost a craze. He cannot speak calmly about it. It continues to shine in the purple light of youth; and, amid all the paths he has traversed, he has never forgotten that immortal path which Bunyan's genius has so boldly mapped out, so variously peopled, and so richly adorned. How can it be forgotten, since it is at once the miniature of the entire world, and a type of the progress of every earnest soul! The City of Destruction, the Slough of Despond, the Delectable Mountains, the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Beulah, and the Black River, are still extant, unchangeable realities, as long as man continues to be tried and to triumph. But it is less in this typical aspect, than as an interesting tale, that Macaulay seems to admire it. Were we to look at it in this light alone, we should vastly prefer Turpin's "Ride to York," or Tam o' Shanter's "Progress to Alloway Kirk." But, as a history of man's moral and spiritual advance, its immortality is secure, though its merits are as yet in this point not appreciated. Bunyan spake inspired; his sufficiently deep heart prompted him to say that to which all deep Christian hearts in all ages should respond; and we may confidently predict that never shall that road be shut up or deserted. As soon stop the current or change the course of the black and bridgeless river.

We might have dwelt, partly in praise and partly in blame, on some of his other articles—might, for instance, have combated his slump and summary condemnation, in "Dryden," of Ossian's Poems—poems which, striking, as they did, all Europe to the soul, must have had some merit, and which, laid for years to the burning heart of Napoleon, must have had some corresponding fire. That, said

Coleridge, of Thomson s "Seasons," lying on the cottage window-sill, is true fame; but was there no true fame in the fact that Napoleon, as he bridged the Alps, and made at Lodi deepest Difficulty itself the slave of his genius, had these poems in his travelling carriage? Could the chosen companion of such a soul, in such moments, be altogether false and worthless? Ossian's Poems we regard as a ruder "Robbers"—a real though clouded voice of poetry, rising in a low age, prophesying and preparing the way for the miracles which followed; and we doubt if Macaulay himself has ever equalled some of the nobler flights of Macpherson. We may search his writings long ere we find anything so sublime, though we may find many passages equally ambitious, as the "Address to the Sun."

He closes his collected articles with his "Warren Hastings," as with a grand finale. This we read with the more interest, as we fancy it a chapter extracted from his forthcoming history. As such, it justifies our criticism by anticipation. Its personal and literary sketches are unequalled, garnished as they are with forgotten scandal, and surrounded with all the accompaniments of dramatic art. Hastings' trial is a picture to which that of Lord Erskine, highly wrought though it be, is vague and forced, and which, in its thick and crowded magnificence, reminds you of the descriptions of Tacitus or (singular connection!) of the paintings of Hogarth. As in Hogarth, the variety of figures and circumstances is prodigious, and each and all bear upon the main object, to which they point like fingers; so from every face, figure, aspect, and attitude, in the crowded Hall of Westminster, light rushes on the brow of Hastings, who seems a fallen god in the centre of the god-like radiance. Even Fox's "sword" becomes significant, and seems to thirst for the proconsul's destruction. But Macaulay, though equal to descriptions of men in all difficult and even sublime postures, never describes scenery well. His landscapes are too artificial and elaborate. When, for example, he paints "Paradise" in Byron, or "Pandemonium" in Dryden, it is by parts and parcels, and you see him pausing and rubbing his brows between each lovely or each terrible item. The scene reluctantly comes, or rather is pulled into view, in slow and painful series. It does not rush over his eye, and require to be detained in its giddy passage. Hence his picture of India in "Hastings" is an admirable picture of an Indian village, but not of India, the country. You have the "old oaks"—the graceful maiden with the pitcher on her head—the courier shaking his bunch of iron rings to scare away the hyenas—but where the eternal bloom, the immemorial temples, the vast blood-spangled mists of superstition, idolatry, and caste, which brood over the sweltering land—the Scotlands of jungle, lighted up by the eyes of tigers, as with infernal stars—the Ganges, the lazy deity of the land, creeping down reluctantly to the sea—the heat encompassing the country like a sullen, sleepy hell—the swift steps of tropical death, heard amid the sulphury silence—the ancient monumental look, proclaiming that all things here continue as they were from the foundation of the world, or seen in the hazy distance as the girdle of the land—the highest peaks of earth soaring up toward the sun, Sirius, and the Centre of the material universe? Macaulay too much separates the material from the moral aspects of the scene, instead of blending them together as exponents of the one great fact, India.

But we must stop. Ere closing, however, we are tempted to add, as preachers do, a solid inference or two from our previous remarks. First, we think we can indicate the field on which Mr Macaulay is likely yet to gain his truest and permanent fame. It is in writing the *literary* history of his country. Such a work is still a desideratum; and no living writer is so well qualified, by his learning and peculiar gifts—by his powers and prejudices—by his strength and his weakness, to supply it. In this he is far more assured of success than in any political or philosophical history. With what confidence and delight would the public follow his guidance, from the times of Chaucer to

those of Cowper, when our literature ceased to be entirely national, and even a stage or two farther! Of such a "progress," we proclaim him worthy to be the Greatheart! Secondly, we infer, from a retrospect of his whole career, the evils of a too easy and a too early success. It is by an early Achillean baptism alone that men can secure Achillean invulnerability, or confirm Achillean strength. This was the redeeming point in Byron's history. Though a lord, he had to undergo a stern training, which indurated and strengthened him to a pitch which all the after blandishments of society could not weaken. Society did not—in spite of our author—spoil him by its favour, though it infuriated him by its resentment. But *he* has been the favoured and petted child of good fortune. There has been no "crook," till of late, either in his political or literary "lot." If he has not altogether inherited, he has approached the verge of the curse, "Wo to you, when all men shall speak well of you." No storms have unbared his mind to its depths. It has been his uniformly to "pursue the triumph and partake the gale." Better all this for his own peace than for his power, or for the permanent effect of his writings.

Let us congratulate him, finally, on his defeat some years ago in Edinburgh. A few more such victories as he had formerly gained, and he had been undone. A few more such defeats, and if he be, as we believe, essentially a man, he may yet, in the "strength of the lonely," in the consciousness and terrible self-satisfaction of those who deem themselves injuriously assailed, perform such deed of "derring-do" as shall abash his adversaries, and astonish even himself.

SECOND SITTING.

One distinction between the great and the half-great is, we think, this—the half-great man, in general, is in his own age fully commented on, and thoroughly appreciated; his character is faithfully inscribed in a multitude of reviews; his career is reflected in a wall of mirrors, which image his every step, and, "now in glimmer and now in gloom," trace out his history ere he be dead, and leave very little for posterity to add or to take away. The great man, on the other hand, while seldom quite overlooked or ignored, is not always during his lifetime fully recognised: a shade of doubt often hangs around his form, like mist around a half-seen Alp; his motions are all tracked, indeed, but tracked in terror and in suspicion; his character, when drawn, is drawn in *chiaro-scuro;* his faults are chronicled more fully than his virtues; the general sigh which arises at the tidings of his death is as much that of relief as of sorrow; and not till the dangerous and infinite-seeming man has been committed safely to the grave, does the world awake to feel that it has hid one of its richest treasures in the field of death. Nor should we entirely for this blame the world. For too often we believe that high genius is a mystery and a terror even to itself; that it communicates with the demoniac mines of sulphur, as well as with the divine sources; and that only God's grace can determine to which of these it is to be permanently connected; and that only the stern alembic of death can settle the question to which it has on the whole turned—whether it has really been the radiant angel, or the disguised fiend.

We might illustrate our first remark by a number of examples. But our recent readings supply us with one more than sufficiently appropriate to our purpose. We have risen from reading for the first time Price's "Life of Burke," and, for the tenth or twentieth time, Macaulay's "Essays," collected from the "Edinburgh Review." And as we rise we are forced to exclaim, "Behold a great man, fairly though faintly painted by another, and a half-great man, unintentionally but most faithfully and fully sketched by himself." Macaulay has eloquently panegyrised Burke, and accurately discriminated him from inferior contemporary minds. But some of *his* indiscrimi-

nate admirers have gone the length of equalling or preferring him to the giant of the Anti-Gallican Crusade. Let us, for their sakes, proceed to point out the essential difference between the two.

Burke, then, was a natural, Macaulay is an artificial, man. Burke was as original as one of the sources of the Nile; Macaulay is a tank or reservoir, brimful of waters which have come from other fountains. Burke's imagination was the strong wing of his strong intellect; Macaulay's fancy is no more native to him than was the wing of the stripling cherub assumed by Satan, the hero of the "Paradise Lost," although, like it, it is of many "a coloured plume sprinkled with gold."

Macaulay's intellect is clear, vigorous, and logical; but Burke's was inventive and synthetic. Burke seems always repressing his boundless knowledge; Macaulay is ostentatious in the display of his. Of Macaulay's train of thought you can always predict the end from the beginning; Burke's is unexpected and changeful. Macaulay's principal powers are two —enormous memory and pictorial power; Burke's are also two—subtle, grasping, inter-penetrating intellect and gorgeous imagination. Burke is the man of genius; Macaulay the elaborate artist. Burke is the creature of impulses and intuitions—impetuous, fervid, often imprudent, and violent; Macaulay never commits himself, even by a syllable, and seems, if he has impulses, to have dipped them in snow, and, if he has intuitions, to have weighed them in scales, before they are produced to his readers. Burke has turned away from philosophic speculation to practical matters—from choice, not necessity; Macaulay from necessity, not choice—it is an element too rare for his wing. Burke, as he says of Reynolds, descends upon all subjects from above; Macaulay labours up to his loftier themes from below. Burke's digressions are those of uncontrollable power, wantoning in its strength; Macaulay's are those of deliberate purpose and elaborate effort, to relieve and make his byways increase the interest of his highways. Burke's most memorable things are strong, simple sentences of wisdom or epithets, each carrying a question on its point, or burning coals from his flaming genius; Macaulay's are chiefly happy illustrations, verbal antitheses, or clever alliterations. Macaulay often seems, and we believe is, sincere, but he is never in earnest; Burke, on all higher questions, becomes a "burning one"—earnest to the brink of frenzy. Macaulay is a utilitarian of a rather low type; Burke is, at least, the bust of an idealist. We defy any one to tell whether Macaulay be a Christian or no; Burke's High Churchism is the lofty buskin in which his fancy loves to tread the neighbourhood of the altar, while before it his heart kneels in lowly reverence. Macaulay's writings often cloy the mind of his reader—you are full to repletion; from Burke's you rise unsatisfied, as from a crumb of ambrosia, or a sip of nectar. Macaulay's literary enthusiasm has begun to assume of late a far and formal air—it seems an old cloak of college days worn threadbare; Burke's has about it a fresh and glorious gloss—it is the ever-renewed *skin* of his spirit. Macaulay lies snugly and sweetly in the pinfold of a party; Burke is ever and anon bursting it to fragments. Macaulay's moral indignation is too laboured and antithetical to be very profound; Burke's makes *his* heart palpitate, his hand clench, and his face kindle, like that of Moses as he came down the Mount. Burke is the prophet; Macaulay the grown and well-furnished schoolboy. Burke, during his lifetime, was traduced, misrepresented, or neglected, as no British man of his order ever was before or since; Macaulay we have asserted before to be the spoiled child of a too early and a too easy success. As they have reaped, they have sown. Macaulay has written brilliant, popular, and useful works, possessing every quality *except* original genius, profound insight, or the highest species of historical truth; Burke, working in an unthankful parliamentary field, has yet dropped from his overflowing hand little living germs of political, moral, literary, pictorial, and philosophic wisdom, which are striking root downwards, and bearing fruit up-

wards throughout the civilised world. Macaulay's works hitherto consist of several octavo volumes; but "Liberated America," "India set free from Tyrants," and "Infidel France Repelled," are the three atlas folios which we owe to the pen and the tongue of Edmund Burke.

We had other points of contrast, which we forbear to press. Indeed, we feel ashamed at continuing so long a contrast between two persons so unlike. But Macaulay's unwise friends have compelled us to renew the old, and apparently superfluous work, of showing the superiority of an original to an imitator—of a sublime genius, informed from on high, to a cultured and consummate artist, galvanised from below—of one wearing a mantle which seemed dropped from some Fiery Chariot of the Past, to one "of the earth, earthy"—of one whose flights of genius and wisdom might almost entitle him to the name of the Second Plato, to one who shall never bear that of the Second Bacon.

We propose now, first, briefly to characterise, and in a general way, some of Macaulay's Essays; and, secondly, to bend special attention on the longest and most elaborate of them all, that on "Lord Bacon."

There are in every author's works what may be called *representative* parts or papers —papers or books which indicate the leading qualities in his mind, or the leading stages in his intellectual development. Thus, in the case before us, we have "Milton" representing Macaulay the young and ardent Scholar; "Byron" and "Johnson" representing him as the full-grown *Litterateur;* "Warren Hastings," and a host more, representing him as the budding Historian; and "Lord Bacon" as the Thinker.

We have, first, "Milton," still, in our judgment, the sincerest, if not the most faultless of his papers. It is the work of a premature and impassioned schoolboy, with the glow of the first perusal of the "Paradise Lost" extant on his cheek, and with the boy's dream of liberty still beating in his heart. Mr Macaulay says, that the paper contains "scarcely a paragraph of which his mature judgment approves." We may add, that there are many paragraphs in it which he now neither could nor durst write. "Men," says James Hogg, in the "Noctes," "often, as they get auld, fancy themsel's wiser, whereas, in fac', they are only stoopider." It is not every one who, like Robert Burns, with his early volume of poems, sees at a glance that the "first bairn o' his brain is also the best." Artistically, Macaulay's "Milton" is not his best; but it is the opening of his vein—he throws forth in it a mass of pure ore, which he has since chiefly been employed in beating thin, or mixing with baser metals. Thus we find him, in many of his subsequent papers, cutting and clipping at his splendid picture of the Puritans—a picture which we deem true to the life of these illustrious men, as well as to the first sincere and burning convictions of Macaulay's young soul. He was not, as Sir Daniel Sandford somewhere insinuates, "a dishonest panegyrist of the Puritans." Brought up in a religious atmosphere, its influence still floated around him, as he wrote of those who "looked down with contempt on the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and on priests — for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language—nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand." But, since, the giddy effects of success and the chilling influences of the world have combined to damp and lower his lofty tone, and he seems more than once inclined to give up the Puritans as a ragged regiment, and to say, "I'll not march with them through Coventry—that's flat." The associate of Lord Palmerston could not latterly retain much sympathy for Harry Vane. When he wrote "Milton," he was a worshipper dividing his adoration between three objects—Poetry, Liberty, and Protestantism—and all three seemed robed in virgin loveliness. All have undergone a disenchantment—Poetry no longer walks the clouds, but the earth; Liberty is no more the "mountain-nymph," but the highly accomplished daughter of a Whig

nobleman dwelling in Grosvenor Square; and Protestantism (see his review of "Ranke"), instead of being the true child of the Primitive Age, and the destined heir of the Earth, is a candidate with nearly the same claims and the same chances of final success, as the "Woman sitting on the scarlet-coloured Beast, and with the names of Blasphemy written on her forehead."

Indeed, we advise any one who wishes to compute the extent and the rapidity of the cooling process which has passed over Macaulay's mind, to compare his papers on "Milton" and on "Ranke." In the one he speaks, with just indignation, of the vices of Popery, "complete subjection of reason to authority, a weak preference of form to substance, a childish passion for mummeries, an idolatrous veneration for the priestly character, and, above all, a merciless intolerance." In his review of Von Ranke, on the other hand, how tenderly does he treat the Jesuits, some of whom he classes beside the Reformers; how coolly he traces the progress of the Catholic reactions; with what satisfaction almost he records that Protestantism has come to a stand-still, forgetting or ignoring the facts that, although as a proselytising power nearly stationary in Europe, it is advancing as a missionary power in every other part of the globe; that, as the principal element of *British* progress, its torch is leading the great march of general civilisation; that, in its rudest shape, as "Protestantism protesting against itself," it has of late begun to heave in revolution every country and throne on the Continent; and that even to hint a doubt as to the ultimate result of its struggle with Popery, is an act of treachery and cowardice, and betrays an ignorance of its true nature and pretensions. In all his later papers, Macaulay talks as if Popery and Protestantism were modifications of one system, instead of being opposed, as light is to darkness, inertia to progress, deceit to truth, God to the devil. And while considering the attempts of such men as Macaulay to fritter away to nothing the distinctions between God's creed and the devil's creed, we are tempted to use the language of the prophet, "Wo to them who put darkness for light and light for darkness, bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter, evil for good and good for evil." The contest between Popery and Protestantism is no scuffle in the dark between detachments of the same army; it is a deadly fight between deadly foes, carried on in one compartment of that field, the world, where the powers of light and darkness have been waging for ages their ever-deepening, ever-widening, but not for a moment dubious engagement.

Protestantism at a stand-still! Neither as a statement of the facts at the time the paper was written, nor as a prophecy of what has occurred since, is this assertion of any value. It is true that nations do not of late change their creeds as individuals their cloaks. Islands are not now converted, as of yore, by the "yellow stick" of a Protestant proprietor (see Dr Johnson's "Tour to the Hebrides"). Protestantism has, like many a strong tide, been rolled back again and again in its progress. Catholicism, on the other hand, has had, and has at this hour, spasmodic revivals, sudden flushes, like the colours of the dying dolphin. She *is* dying hard. Nor can she fully expire till the brightness of Christ's coming surprise, and the "breath of his mouth" consume, her. But, apart from this, we think it difficult for a candid and true-telling observer to shut his eyes to the fact of a slow, steady, cumulative advance on the part of Protestantism — often repulsed, sometimes driven fiercely back, but always returning to the charge, and gaining sure and gradual ground with the wave of each successive generation. What, after all, has she lost? At her birth, she was hailed by literature and science: they — on the points, at least, in which she differs from Popery — are on her side still. Her infant arm lifted the Printing Press, the Mariner's Compass, and the Telescope. She holds them now with a stronger grasp than ever. She rent then the shroud from the Bible, and she still defies the Catholic world to repair the rent. In Britain and the United States, and the

great rising colonies of the South, and in the stronger half of Germany, she possesses the real keys of the intellectual world —keys more powerful than those fabled ones which clank at the side of Peter. In our own country, she, not long ago, with almost a superfluous expenditure of power and wrath, repelled the insolence of Papal aggression. One thing only does she want, to complete the strength and dignity of her attitude—that is, not to become more Popish, but to become more Protestant. Without sacrificing her Bible or the leading principles of her creeds, without yielding to the raving scepticisms of the day, she might and must accommodate her spirit and language to those of the age; she might in many points abridge and modify her articles of faith; she might and must get rid of the wretched incrustations of Paganism and Popery which are still around her—become, in short, that New Protestantism for which Milton's spirit long ago sighed, which alone can attract and detain before the Lord the young and the gifted of the age, and be thus prepared, as the "Bride, the Lamb's Wife," for welcoming her Husband, when he descends to the Universal Bridal. And then, like Milton's eagle, shall this young and puissant Protestantism rise above the fogs of scepticism, and the purple mists of Rome, and mate her stern and starry eye with the unearthly and far-streaming glory attending the steps of Him "who shall come, will come, and will not tarry."

In his papers on Byron and Johnson, we find his enthusiasm wondrously subdued and united to an artistic self command, a self-consciousness, an elaborate wit, a bitter sarcasm, and a *tone of society*, not to be found in his first paper. With the exception of his papers on Madame D'Arblay and Addison, they are the last of his purely literary articles. Before he wrote them, he had entered Parliament, and there is in both a great deal of the clever parliamentary reply. The elaborate carelessness of the papers on Byron is wonderful. Never was art more artificially concealed. Never did a deliberate and oil-smelling production seem so like an *impromptu*. Done in the sweat of his brow, it yet reads like a private letter. Its simplest-seeming sentences have probably cost him most trouble. Such are a "poor lord and a handsome cripple." "Lord Byron's system had two great commandments, to *hate your neighbour*, and *to love your neighbour's wife*." How cool such fledglings seem! and yet they were probably hatched with great care, and amid considerable heat. His character of Byron is a long antithesis, and might, had it been done into rhyme, have figured well in Pope's "Moral Epistles." Bits of blame, and pats of praise, are distributed with exemplary equality. But, to apply his own words, "it is not the business of the critic to exhibit characters in this sharp antithetical way." It is his business rather to show us the true nature of the man at once, by a winged word, or a simple sentence, or in a figure "piercing to the dividing asunder of his soul and spirit." Had he spoken of Byron's aimless earnestness, his unprincipled and ill-managed power, his union of generosity and selfishness, his strong religious tendencies, connected with an utter want of definite religious or even irreligious opinions, or hinted at the dark germ of derangement which was working all along in his bosom, he had, in a sentence, helped us to a distincter view of the poet's character, than by his whole seventeen pages of unmingled brilliancy. As it is, he accounts for Byron's matchless misery from his bad education, the loss of his first love, the nervousness of dissipation; from every cause save the deepest of all—the want of habitual intercourse with the Father of spirits. Byron was miserable, because he felt himself an orphan, a sunbeam cut off from his source, "without hope, and without God in the world." But how puritanical would any statement like this have looked in the eyes of the Reform Club, or of the splendid circles of Holland House!

To Boswell and Johnson he is, we think, unjust, in various measures. Boswell, in his relation to Johnson, was one of the most sincere and remarkable of men. Used like a spaniel by his idol; now caressed contemptuously, and now

fiercely spurned; laughed at by his friends and by the world for his attachment to Johnson, he remained true to him to the last, and has suffered for it after as well as before death, and nowhere more severely than at Macaulay's hands. To worship was the master instinct of his being, and he could no more avoid following it, than can the moon escape the gravitation of the earth. His conduct was the finer, from the contrast it presented to the selfish and infidel habits of the eighteenth century. Boswell had a god—Johnson; but Voltaire and Hume had none, except themselves or their callous theories. Boswell, in short, seems to us the first crude curdling of the future Hero-worshipper, as the Alchymist was the rude forerunner of the genuine Chemist. Nor were his talents so contemptible as Macaulay alleges. He was undoubtedly a clever and cultivated man. And the power to which he principally pretended, that of appreciation, he possessed in a very large degree. He *saw* Johnson as few even since have seen him; he gave him, during his life, an ante-past of the praise of future ages, and he added one important item to his claims for immortality. Boswell's "Life," according to many, is Johnson's greatest work; according to all, it is *one* of his best. Nay, we cannot but fancy that Macaulay originally possessed a great deal of the better element of Boswell, as his "Milton" testifies, and that to clear himself of the suspicion of being a Boswell of a bigger size, he has shed the blood of his own spiritual father.

Scarcely less unjust is he to Johnson himself, who, had he been alive, would certainly have turned him on the spit of one of his rolling periods before the slow, grim blaze of his manly indignation. "What is your opinion, Dr J., of Thomas Babington Macaulay?"—"Sir, the dog has some gifts and accomplishments, but he is a Whig, a vile Whig, a trimmer, sir, who would have acted as laureate to King George and the Pretender at the same time."—"Isn't he something like Burke, sir?"—"No, sir; Macaulay, sir, has not breath to blow the bellows to Burke's fire. As Goldy would say, he has Burke's 'tongue,' but without 'the garnish' of his 'brains.'"—"What think you of his style, sir?"—"It is mine, sir, docked; yet the dog turns round, and abuses the suit of clothes he has not only stolen, but *mangled down*, sir, to his own stature."—"Doesn't he know a great deal, sir?"—"Yes, sir, facts, not principles; he has millions of farthings, but few guineas, and no bank-bills; he is like a schoolboy, who knows all the birds' nests in the parish, but can neither fly, nor lay an egg, sir, nor even incubate to life the deposits of others."—"What think you of his religious creed, sir?"—"Why, sir, it is that of one who prefers God to the devil, because he is in, and not because he ought to be in, and who is full of saving clauses lest the tables should one day be turned, and the New Premier prove somewhat absolute. He has no creed, sir, only a new credibility of God and the gospels, sir."—"Isn't he descended from your old friend, Miss Macaulay, sir?"—"Too-too-too, sir, not from *Miss* Macaulay, surely, sir. His grandfather was a minister in the Hebrides, and probably had the second sight, which he has not left to his descendant, any more than old Zachary left him his evangelicalism, sir."

Dr Johnson's merit, according to Macaulay, has now shrivelled up into his "careless table-talk." His writings have little merit. His criticisms on Shakspere and Milton are "wretched." He knew nothing of the "genus man—only of the species, Londoner." His style is "systematically vicious." His mannerism is "sustained only with constant effort." His "big words are wasted on little things." His prejudices and intellectual faults, too, are magnified by being torn from their context, and set up in cluster upon one pillory. Thus complacently does he try to "write down" old Sam an ass. The attempt is as insolent as we hope to show it to be vain. Now, first, his table-talk was not "careless." It was the very sweat of his mind. In all good society he "talked his best." Secondly, it has discovered no new powers in Johnson's mind, although it has revealed new weak-

nesses. It has *increased* our notion of his variety, shrewdness, and readiness of retort, but not of his power, eloquence, and deep-hearted sincerity of nature. Thirdly, with regard to the prejudices and failings of this mighty man of valour, we ought to remember his time, his training, the dark disease which, like the leprosy in an ancient house, sent a stream of misery and embryotic madness throughout all the porticoes of his splendour, and all the columns of his strength—polluted every door, and looked out at every window—to remember that strong and rock-founded that house must have been, to contain unbroken such a fearful guest—and to remember, in fine, that he is a poor forester who judges of an oak by its gnarled knots—and a petty astronomer who weighs the spots against the body of the sun. Fourthly, that his criticisms on Shakspere and Milton do not bring out the minor beauties, the more delicate shades, the subtler meanings, of our two great national poets, is admitted. Johnson's mental, like his bodily, eye saw only tall cliffs, wide fields, bold mountains, broad outlines—it was not conversant with details of minute varieties. But who has spoken better of the more general and palpable qualities of Shakspere, or of "Paradise Lost"—the pyramid of Milton's handiwork? *It* he found to surpass even his own Brobdignagian stature, and looking up to it in reverence, he had little leisure to mark the subordinate buildings on which Milton had slowly piled up its proud pinnacle. He is accused of not praising the "Castle of Indolence" very warmly, but he gives its author, and his far better poem the "Seasons," their full meed. He called "Gray a barren rascal, and Churchill a blockhead;" but, if Mr Macaulay had, as at *other* times, chosen to translate these expressions out of *Johnsonese* into plain English, they had just meant the truth—this, namely, that Gray's genius was not so prolific as his learning was extensive, and that Churchill was not so good as he was able, and not so able as many thought. In fact, his real offence, as a critic, in the eyes of many, is what, with us, is a merit. Himself a sincerely honest, pious man, an intense hater of humbug, of deceit, of brazen-faced infidelity, of twaddling sentimentalism, of the cant of virtue, and of the tant of vice, he has unsparingly exposed such offences wherever he found them, and many who cry out about his critical, have, in fact, taken fright at his moral, severity. Fifthly, as to the faults and mannerism of his style, we are not "careful to answer in this matter," least of all, in reply to the leading mannerist of this century. Johnson's is the mannerism of a left-handed giant. He throws awkwardly, but he throws stones which Macaulay could not *lift*. To say that he "sustains his style by constant effort," is simply untrue. It is notorious that the most sounding papers in the "Rambler" were written at a sitting, and *currente calamo*. He had but to dip his pen in ink, and there flowed out a current of thought and language, wide and voluminous as the Ganges in flood. We own our wrath always kindles when we hear others besides Macaulay preferring Addison to Johnson. We are not blind, as a future paper shall testify, to his timid beauties, his inimitable irony, slight and withering as the smile of a scornful angel, his languid graces, the elegant negligence of his costume, his sweet-blooded and subtle humour, or his graver powers of contemplation and pathos; but there is this important difference in Johnson's favour:—Addison is chiefly a mirror; Johnson is a native mind. Addison reflects back—man and nature; Johnson is a thinker, penetrating into both. Addison's discussions and philosophising, even when just, are feeble; Johnson's, even when erroneous, are always strong. Witness the papers on the "Paradise Lost" by the one, and the "Lives of the Poets" by the other—a work which, with all its faults, is the most masculine and massive body of criticism in the English tongue. Addison's may be called almost a female mind of exquisite calibre; Johnson was every inch a man, nay, a son of Anak, from the rough earth, but with a heart touched and a brow radiant with the influence and light of heaven. We

base, indeed, our deepest admiration of this great man on his moral and religious qualities. We are never weary of thinking of his sterling honesty, his rugged integrity, his fearlessness of consequences, his untaught dignity, his generous sympathies for all real sorrows, his benevolence —bear-like in its external manifestations, lamb-like in its heart—the depth and profundity of his spiritual convictions, the tenderness of his conscience, the firmness with which he clung to Christianity, in a low and infidel age, "faithful found among the faithless," his habitual fear of God; yea, we are not soon weary of admiring the rim of righteous anger which surrounded him at times—the severity of his occasional judgments—the fury of his assaults upon impostors of all sorts; and we can even bear with his sturdy prejudices, the errors of his temperament, the hasty verdicts of his excited conversation, his political and religious bigotries, and the rough usage he often gave to his friends and worshippers. These, like the scars of scrofula upon his cheek, are not beautiful, but they are *his*, and if they injure the grace of his aspect, they neither take a cubit from his intellectual stature, nor damp the vehement, though irregular flame of benevolence, sincerity, manhood, and piety, which burned in his heart. Would to God that some similar giant were now to tower up suddenly above the crowd of our sciolists, sceptics, and small poets, and rebuke them into sense, modesty, and Christianity again! Johnson was too decidedly an honest, fearless, and brawny original for Macaulay's handling. He succeeds far better in depicting the splendid claptrap of Chatham, the gin-crack ingenuity and polished malice of Horace Walpole, the manners-painting force of Madame D'Arblay, and the cultured common sense and elaborate eloquence of Sir James Mackintosh. He succeeds better still in crushing the wasp Croker, sting, wings, bag of venom, and all, by one nervous grasp of his strong hot hand, or in clapping into air, amid mimic thunder, the empty paper-bags of some of our modern poets.

As Macaulay's series of papers went on, it became manifest that he was gradually diverging from the flowery fields of literature, and turning towards the more difficult and less frequented heights of history. His "Machiavelli," "Burleigh," "Chatham," "Temple," and "Lord Clive," were all, in reality, historical chapters—*the antennæ of coming historical works*. Of such, by far the ablest and most brilliant is the article on "Warren Hastings." Indeed, we find in it, as in a microcosm, all the qualities, positive and negative, since more largely displayed in his "History of England." These are intimate acquaintance, not only with the leading events, but with the minutiæ, the gossip, the family history, and the floating scandal of the period; intense sympathy with the *personnel* of his heroes—a partiality for certain characters amounting to favouritism—a hatred for others amounting to fury—immense power of painting traits in character, and scenes in historic life—an inferior gift of describing nature —frequent, cool, and refreshing literary allusions, blowing like breezes across the otherwise arid or blood-dried pages of his tale—Whig zeal and religious indifferentism, both indifferently concealed—an occasional negligence of style more highly finished in reality than the most swelling of his paragraphs—great and laboured passages, reminding you of historical paintings, and relieved by surrounding etchings of familiar life—a perpetual consciousness of himself, and of the artistic nature of his task, which seldom permits any spontaneous betrayal of emotion, and makes even his enthusiasm seem cold, as the hair of a sculptured Mœnad—something of the interest and simplicity of Hume, along with the richer tints of Robertson, and the gorgeous description of Gibbon —all the qualities of a good novel, added to some of those of an ideal history— these are the leading peculiarities alike of his historical papers, such as "Hastings," and of his "England," and they constitute him a historian after this age's own heart.

Admitting right cordially the exceeding interest and graphic power of the paper on Hastings, there are one or two points

on which we must differ. We find in it evidences of that infirmity of trimming and balancing which so easily besets our author. We certainly do not think that Warren Hastings was a monster; but, if the half of what Burke said, and the whole of what even Macaulay says, against him be true, he must have been one of the worst characters in history. If seduction, perfidy, cruelty, greed, murder, both retail and wholesale, implacable revenge, insatiable ambition, with a hundred smaller items of falsehood and corruption, are to be screened by success, it is time that the Ten Commandments were burned, the Sermon on the Mount buried, and the laws of nations and of nature repealed. Either he was one of the worst or one of the most maligned of men. Macaulay takes neither view; but between admiration of Hastings' abilities, and anger at some of his actions—reverence for Burke, and pity for the accused—sympathy with the oppressed people of India, and wonder at the splendid edifice of empire which was based on their blood—he himself hangs, and he suspends his readers in a state of equilibrium which becomes half-painful and half-ludicrous, and tempts you at last to exclaim, "What would you have us to think of this man, after all? Was he a wise governor, or a cruel and unmanly oppressor? Shall we bless, or shall we ban him? Shall he sit in the synod of the gods, or where Burke would have placed him, in that part of the Indian Pantheon where dwell the horrid deities who preside over small-pox and murder, and who, like the tremendous Three in the 'Curse of Kehama,' expecting the coming of the 'Man Almighty,' might be conceived to wait impatiently for his advent, 'having been found worthy' to sit beside them on a burning throne?"

There is another point on which we crave a word in addition to our former remarks: it is on the authorship of the "Letters of Junius." This Macaulay, somewhat dogmatically, attributes *entirely* to Sir Philip Francis, although there is much internal evidence to prove him incapable of their better portions. The mere mechanism of their composition, the curt style, the fierceness and occasional malignity of their spirit, he could have supplied, but the profounder touches of satire, the strong clearness of diction, the high, almost superhuman scorn which so often inspirits them, the frequent gleams of deep political sagacity, and the figures, sparing in number, but breathing an intense poetical spirit—all point to the darker moods and the fretted and gall-dipped pen of Edmund Burke. We do not mean that he was their sole or chief author, but that his subtle genius had its share in their conception, even as it had in some of Barry's pictures and Reynolds's discourses; and that he drew many of their sharpest and finest strokes, seems to us certain, and to some others, too, who can recognise that "Roman hand," and who know that its versatility was equal to its power. Burke notoriously was in the secret* of their authorship. He was, according to Johnson, the only man living equal to their composition. And as to style, neither he nor Junius were consistent in it. Junius had three different styles:—that of his private notes to Woodfall—that of his hasty letters, such as his first to Horne Tooke—and that of his more elaborate epistles. Burke, too, strange to say, had three styles:—his plain style, as of his charges against Hastings—his middle style, as of his "Sublime and Beautiful," and "Thoughts on the Present Discontents"—and his ornate and poetical style, as in his "French Revolution," and his "Regicide Peace." There are, besides, passages and clauses in Junius which we are as sure were Burke's, as if we had seen him write, or dictate, or interline them. Take one—"the melancholy madness of genius without the inspiration." Burke once said to Boswell, about Herbert Croft, "he has the contortions of the sibyl, *without the inspiration.*" Of another we may say (accommodating Macaulay's language on another occasion), "Aut Burke aut Diabolus." It is in reference to Wilkes: "The gentle breath of peace will leave

* See Prior's "Burke," Vol. I.

him on the surface, unruffled and unremoved. It is only the tempest that lifts him from his place." We could add a hundred more. On the whole, were we on a jury to try the question as to the authorship of "Junius," we should be compelled, between the conflicting forces of the external and the internal evidences, to return a verdict against "Edmund Burke, Philip Francis, and other person or persons *unknown*."

Ne sutor ultra crepidam, is a proverb so commonplace, as to require an apology for its repetition. And yet we cannot remember anything more appropriate to the light in which we are now to regard the subject of this sketch, in connection with his paper on Lord Bacon—which is, Macaulay the Thinker. To use his own illustration, "Hannibal at Waterloo, or Wellington at Platæa," were not more thoroughly out of place than Macaulay "found" in the difficult region of intellectual thought—a region which he knows not fully, has seldom visited, has visited not in the choicest society, and where he has never yet, we suspect, *spent a night*, the glooms and the grandeurs of which are alike unappreciated by his strong but unimaginative and uninstinctive spirit.

Had we foreseen that Macaulay meant so far to compromise his reputation as to write a paper on a purely philosophical subject, we should have put in a previous protest, based on the following grounds:—First, in all his other writings he gives no evidence of possessing the elements of a genuine thinker. He thinks in facts, not in figures or symbols. He estimates all things by their sharp corners, not by their solid bulks or their ideal shadows. He looks at them not as they are, but as they seem to him, or to the mirror from which he has caught their shape. The term absolute (except in its political sense, as connected with "absolute power!") has to him little or no meaning. He has an outer eye of much scope and clearness, but his inner eye is midnight. We dare any of his admirers to quote a sentence of his writings containing in it a new truth, chased in a new image—"an apple of gold in a picture of silver." Of poetic physics, he has some distinct idea—of poetic metaphysics, none whatever. Nor has he given himself that philosophic culture and training which would qualify him for sounding metaphysical depths. With all his vast knowledge, it is clear to us that he has only run across the surface of philosophy, and studied it rather as a historian, than as a profound critic of its various systems and schools. Nor has his temperament or his heart ever urged him on to very earnest personal inquiry into the grounds of belief or leading principles of thought. Easily satisfied himself, he has been unable to give satisfaction or even suggestive hints to earnest and anxious inquirers. The profound thinker is either decidedly religious in his temperament and views, or decidedly the reverse. Macaulay is neither. And hence, while he speaks on historical matters with authority and power, on all abstract questions he exhibits the feebleness without the modesty of a child. The voice and manner are those of a master, but the matter and spirit are those of an inapt and forward scholar.

Lord Bacon was a subject, certainly, more than worthy of all the powers of the author. The apparent contradictions in his character, the singular and humiliating events of his history, his position as the leader of a wide intellectual movement, his achievements as the broad-browed parent of modern method—the width of his mind, which reminds you of the first rude maps of the globe, where the breadth and the blunders are alike enormous—the oriental wealth and splendour of his fancy, recalling to you Solomon "speaking of trees, from the cedar to the hyssop," and issuing proverbs by the thousand—the proud, positive results which have sprung from his system, have combined to render the woolsack on which sat he whom the poet calls

"The greatest, wisest, meanest of mankind,"

more interesting and more magnificent in many men's view than the thrones of "Ormus or of Ind," and to make them think of an angel seated on a planet, and looking down in supreme dominion upon

the subjected provinces of a universal intellectual empire.

To grapple with such a mind and character was a noble task, and Macaulay has undoubtedly brought to it all the resources of his knowledge, the strength of his ingenuity, and the energies of his style. But he has at the same time exposed himself to certain grave charges, into the proof of which we must now shortly enter.

Now, first, as in reference to Hastings and other equivocal characters, he has not painted Bacon well as a whole. He has set the apparently contradictory parts of his character in violent and antithetical opposition to each other—opposition so violent as to produce a monstrous effect; he has not seen or shown to us any principle accounting for and unifying the whole. God does not make men on the plan of antithesis. Pterodactyles and all such contradictions of chaos are long extinct. Inconsistencies, of course, there are in all characters: but where a character is hollow and false, the intellectual power must be partially vitiated, and where the heart is extinct, the mind must have its flaws and feebleness too. Had Bacon been the "greatest," he never could have been the "meanest" of mankind. The charges which Macaulay so ably and unanswerably urges against his *morale* tell, in some measure, against his method of investigating truth. Who, if we may accommodate Scripture language, "can bring a warm system out of a cold nature, a true creed out of a false heart?" No, not one!

There never was any such mis-creation as a *great* bad man, although wonderful and extraordinary villains have abounded. A really great man cannot be bad—a bad man cannot be really great. Prove the greatness, and you disprove the badness—or prove the badness, and you shatter down the greatness. A great man may be defined as one living under a lofty ideal, and having power in part to realise it. But the presence of a lofty ideal proves the absence of systematic and cold-blooded depravity, of abject meanness, of cowardice, cruelty, or falsehood. All true greatness is more or less moral. The highest cherub *is* also the purest seraph. The player Shakspere was an infinitely better and greater man than the Chancellor Bacon, and would have died rather than have committed one of his viler deeds, or handled one piece of his unclean gold. The philosophers of Greece, whom Macaulay would crush under Bacon's feet, had many faults, but not the worst of them cuts such a disgraceful and contemptible figure as he; and does this furnish no *prestige* in favour of their intuitive and transcendental method?

The extraordinary and able men of no principle or heart, who abound in the history of the world, remind us of busts—all brow and no heart. They are the incarnations of mere understanding—having neither, if we may use Kant's language, the pure reason, which perceives the absolute as existence—nor the practical reason, which discerns it as moral law. The great are composed of a combination, more or less varied in its proportions, of the pure reason, the logical understanding, the practical reason, and the imaginative sympathy. *They* are the composites, although the combination is definite, not contradictory. Whereas, the merely extraordinary man has the simple positive of understanding, added to a copious list of negatives. To this Bacon united the gift of a munificent fancy, not to speak of his multifarious knowledge and acquirements.

But, secondly and chiefly, we charge Macaulay with greatly overrating Lord Bacon's philosophy, and with underrating, at the same time, the philosophies which preceded him. And here we mean out of his own mouth to condemn him. Now, to pursue him down his paper *seriatim*, we find him, as to the aim or end of the two philosophies, admitting, that while Bacon's sought solely the "relief of man's estate," that of the ancients aimed at "moral perfection." In other words, Bacon professed to cure corns, and Plato to heal consciences. Bacon wished to teach men to make better ships, or, as Macaulay has it, "better shoes;" and

Plato to teach them to have nobler and happier souls. Bacon sought "fruit," perhaps engrafted on rotten trees; whereas Plato and his school sought, although with imperfect success, to make the root of the tree sound, and its circulating sap pure. Bacon sought to make men better citizens of this hollow world; Plato to prepare them for the "City of God"—the everlasting mansions of the true, the spiritual, and the happy. How significant that Bacon died, in consequence of seeking to stuff a fowl with snow—an apt emblem of the coldness and comparative pettiness of his method, and rather a striking type, too, of the manner in which his ablest modern panegyrist has sought to embalm a cowardly nature in elegant, elaborate, and icy praise.

"*Although* with *im*perfect success." These words will be seized on by the Baconian, and turned against us. But, first, we intend, ere we close, to show that the success of Bacon's method has been exaggerated; secondly, we remember the words, "in great attempts 'tis glorious even to *fail;*" thirdly, to Plato and his direct or indirect influence, we may attribute all the *mere philosophic* spiritualism of the cultivated world—which, while "far *below* the good, is far *above* the great;" fourthly, Platonism was the herald of Christianity, and its failure lay in the want of some elements which Christianity supplied—namely, a perfect model, a supernatural power, and a permanent divine influence; fifthly, on the grounds on which Macaulay claims superiority to Bacon over the Platonic school, we might claim superiority for a tailor over Bacon or Plato either. But we may leave the details of this startling preference, although *legitimately deducible* from our author's premises, to the imagination of our readers. And, sixthly, he forgets, or overshoots while remembering, the fact, that he is talking of the *aim* of the two systems, and not at this point of their actual results. To make man better may not be so practicable as to improve the strops of his razors, but surely even at the first blush it is a *loftier* attempt.

But, according to Macaulay, contradicting old Seneca, "the first shoemaker was a greater philosopher than Seneca himself." Had he said the "first maker of a foot," he would have been nearer the mark. Neither Seneca nor the aboriginal shoemaker strikes us as a very wonderful philosopher. Both only shaped out the ideal of greater artists, the one imperfectly that of the Plato, the Pythagoras, and the Zeno, who saw the vast superiority of the soul to the body, of the next life to this, and the other of that plastic power, which, in forming a foot, silently bade man, while he covered its nakedness, to emulate its symmetry and copy its curve. But dare Macaulay expect sympathy, when denying Seneca's assertion that "philosophy *lies deeper* than inventing transparent windows, tubes for diffusing warmth, or shorthand?" Judging by this statement, we should prefer Seneca as an expounder of the ideal philosophy, to Macaulay as an illustrator of the utilitarian. We are certain that the "three books on Anger" contain nothing so contemptible as the preference he gives, by implication, to "the man who teaches us to use our hands," over him "whose object is to form our souls." Not in the pages of Combe, or Robert Chambers, or of that Benthamite school which Macaulay himself once assaulted, do we remember anything so grossly absurd, or which more helplessly sacrifices the unhappy cause committed to his advocacy.

What! a shorthand writer equal to a philosopher or a great orator—Woodfall above Burke, Gurney above Canning, or Nelson of the "Times" above Wellington. And yet, such abject trash, when printed in the "Edinburgh Review," or re-published by the "Historian of England," must gain unchallenged acceptance, and require this humble pen to dash it into exposure and contempt.

In the paragraph which follows, he throws out insinuations against Seneca's character, which require only two remarks. First, Seneca is no more to be taken as a fair type of the Platonic philosophy, than Emerson of the system of Fichte, or Combe of Benthamism. He was the hard dreg

of a Stoic, and the Stoic was only the stony similitude of a Platonist. And, secondly, should we accept this test of character in judging of Seneca's system, what is there to prevent us from applying it to Bacon's, upon the premises Macaulay has newly laid down, namely, that Bacon, if he *did* not, like Seneca, "meditate epigrammatic conceits about the evils of luxury in gardens, which moved the envy of sovereigns, rant about liberty, while fawning on the insolent and pampered freemen of a tyrant, nor celebrate the divine beauty of virtue with the same pen which had just before written a defence of the murder of a mother by a son" —nevertheless *did*, and that, too, under the light of Christianity in its full blaze, take bribes for justice, till corruption's own brazen brow grew pale, and her iron hand trembled; suffer the profligate minion of a monarch to influence his most solemn judicial decisions; pervert the old laws of England to the vilest purposes of tyranny, by "tampering with judges, and torturing a prisoner," who, like the laws, was venerable, innocent, and old—and, lastly, become the betrayer, and the public, voluntary, and malignant accuser, of his own principal friend and patron? It is from his hand, be sure, and not from Seneca's, that our author would expect the key of nature. The two succeeding paragraphs contain a caricature of the objects and results of ancient philosophy, and their sting might easily be extended to all metaphysics, and to all theology. Mr Macaulay forgets what he had so recently stated, that one object of academical studies is to elevate and purify the soul—a purpose independent of objective results: he forgets that the fruit sought being of the rarest kind, and hanging on the topmost branches of the tree of knowledge, cannot be gathered without long labour, and that the maintenance of a lofty spiritualism, of an attitude of wonder and worship among the better minds of every succeeding age, is a richer result than all the possible discoveries made under the Baconian method. Who would set the history of patents above that of opinions? Because theologic science has not unriddled the mystery of a God, or explained the conditions or the localities of the future life, must the truths involved in such speculations, and the influences their agitation has exerted on the spiritual nature of man, be degraded in practical power below gas, the steam-engine, or the diving-bell? Are churches, missionary societies, great religious movements, high spiritual poems, and holy lives, not worthy "fruit?"—and these, under God, we in this nineteenth century owe, not to the school of Bacon, but to that combination of the philosophy of Plato, and the divine teaching and working of Jesus, which constitutes the only theology, whether theoretic or practical, deserving the name—the theology of Taylor, Howe, Milton, and Coleridge.

The Baconian philosophy bears flowers and fruits in great abundance—and every year; but the deep thought of the ancient Greek mind, informed and warmed by the supernatural Sun of Christianity, like the aloe, brings forth, at long intervals, its precious blossoms, of which you may say with the poet—when you contrast them with more short-lived and earthy productions—"one blossom of Eden outblooms them all," and the fruit of which is everlasting. For why? Bacon sowed the thin soil of the finite and the present; Plato the deep loam of the permanent and the infinite. Bacon expected and received the return of an early crop of material results; Plato's harvest lay in the slow yield of souls. "Now the things seen are temporal, but the things unseen are eternal."

Macaulay next expresses a disappointed hope in the "Epicureans." They were, according to him, mutilated utilitarians. It was even wonderful that "Epicurus' stye did not breed a Bacon." *They* approached the true and sensible notion of things, in "referring all happiness to bodily pleasure, and all evil to bodily pain." But, like the gods in whom they were said to believe, they were lazy, and preferred lolling in the sun to constructing Novum Organons. *Our* notion of their sense is increased by this. If all happiness lies in bodily pleasure, and all

evil in bodily pain, it may be a question if it be not our "strength to sit still," to take the good the gods provide us, or to drink our hemlock in silence, instead of moving heaven and earth, and convulsing the spheres, in order to wheel round to our feet new varieties of the same mixed and eternal meal. It was reserved for Macaulay to trace the proud Baconian Tree, which some compare to the Tree of Life, with its "many manner of fruits, and its leaves for the healing of the nations,". to a rejected acorn from the trough of Epicurus.

That an infection of despondency seemed to lie upon other shapes of the Grecian philosophy besides the Epicurean, is granted to their detractor. But he has not pointed out the element which would have dissipated this gloom. That was Christianity, with its supernatural discoveries of the immortality of man—of his intimate relations to God—and of the God-Man Mediator. The ancient philosophers saw the necessities and cravings of man's immortal nature; they felt that to seek to supply these by temporal comforts were as insulting and absurd as to give rich food to a raging fever; they felt, some of them, that one great want of man was an Incarnation of the Godhead, and they had even a hope of his appearance —saw in some measure his "day afar off, and were glad," but it was only a dim prospect, after all, and they lived not to see the culmination of their systems, and the completion of their desires, in the divine Carpenter of Nazareth. Hence, their systems have an imperfect aspect—like the Sphinx or the Tower of Babel—and, because only half-finished, have been treated as ruins. But to call their despondency "contented" is unjust. If they sought moral perfection, and sought it sincerely, but found it not, how could they remain contented? Is even the maniac who tries to leap to the moon contented with his fall? On the contrary, the Baconian philosophy having made its bow to Christianity, and derived from it something of its liberal and unfettered spirit, has too often proceeded in its investigations to ignore its existence, or to treat its occasional protests with impatient scorn.

It is easy to enlarge on the errors of the schoolmen. But to charge these upon the ancient philosophers, is as unfair as to confound Popery with Christianity. Scholasticism was the putrefaction of the old philosophy, deriving a twofold virulence from the co-eval putrefaction of religion, or it might be termed the dotage and driveldom of the Grecian philosophy. But, though doomed to dote, that glorious thing was not doomed to die. In spite of Macaulay's pæan over its fall, it is alive and in full vigour still, and, surviving Bacon's system, may merge, like the Morning Star, only in the Sun of that divine vision which we, according to His promise, expect sooner or later to irradiate the evening of the world.

Mr Macaulay, after comparing Bacon to Bonaparte—a comparison with two edges—proceeds to make the following extraordinary statement:—"The object of the new philosophy was the good of mankind, *in the sense* in which the *mass of* mankind always *understood*, and *will always* understand, the word good." Surely this gentleman was born to be a fatal friend to the fame of the Baconian system. What has been the object or "good" always hitherto sought or contemplated by the *mass* of mankind? Has it not been selfish gratification, in one or other of its myriad forms? Alas! for Bacon and his philosophy, if this was their object too! And alas! for man, if he is never to rise to a higher purpose; and if the Baconian philosophy be merely a devil's wind to fan the sails of human selfishness to the end of time! Indeed, we are now at this point tempted to ask, if Mr Macaulay be not, after all, conducting a long, insidious, and ironical argument against Bacon's idea and method, after he had, in the former part of the paper, triumphantly demolished and trampled on his personal character. We defy the bitterest opponent of our English sage to utter a severer sentence against his system than has his eloquent and seemingly sincere eulogist. Poor Bacon! has he not fared like a man who should

sit down to have his features copied by an artist apparently friendly, and should continue to smile, well pleased, while on the other side of the canvas there was rising, to the tune of smothered laughter, the most hideous of caricatures?

But this suspicion—which would save the intellect at the expense of the honesty of the writer—fades away and becomes incredible, as we follow him a little farther. He goes on to contrast the estimates Plato and Bacon have respectively formed of the different branches of knowledge. Plato thought that the "great office of geometry was to discipline the mind, not to minister to the base wants of the body." Macaulay, on the other hand, sneers at "the abstract, essential, eternal truths" of this science, but passes over the great objection to its study, which is, that men accustomed to mathematical evidence become often incapable of appreciating or receiving any other. There is a mist around the region of mathematics colder and denser than that of metaphysics; and he who finds the darkness of problems clear, will by and by wink and be struck blind by the blaze of day. But surely the idea of mathematics propounded by Plato is far loftier than the other—unless Meyer on "Mensuration" can be compared to Newton's "Principia."

In talking of their estimates of astronomy, Macaulay grants that both agree in condemning the astronomy which then existed, and in desiderating a higher and purer; but, strange to say, he prefers Bacon's "living astronomy," which seems to have been nothing else than *astrology*, to Plato's, which was a fine and large idealism. Bacon aspired to know the "nature and the *influences* of the heavenly bodies as they really are;" Plato, to attain to an astronomy to which the "stars are like the figures which a geometrician draws on the sand—an astronomy 'independent of the stars.'" Suppose either of these imaginary astronomies attainable; which of the two, we ask, were the nobler? Suppose both visionary; which vision is the grander of the two? Our common astronomy may be compared to a measurement of the dimensions of the human *brain;* Bacon's to a knowledge of its relations to the body and the nervous system; and Plato's to the study of the mind, of which the brain is but the organ. The stars may be called the developments of the "Head of the universe:" our common astronomers number them, and take their weights and sizes; Bacon wishes to know how they are connected with our every-day life and fortunes; Plato, to read the divine idea—the large thought and purpose of God—inscribed on them in legible fire.

It seems to us that in this science we are fast approaching a point where we need the guidance rather of a new Plato than of a new Bacon or Newton. The telescope of Lord Rosse has sounded our present astronomy to its real depths. Few more great prizes are reserved, we suspect, in that starry sea. We have attained the knowledge that the stars are old, that they are of one stuff, and that there is no visible end to their numbers. What more of any moment, in this direction, by our present methods, is ever likely to be reached by us! It is like walking through a pine forest of vast extent and uniform aspect: a few miles tire and satisfy us. So now, the news of "stars, stars, stars," pouring on us in everlasting succession—all *like* each other, all distant, all inscrutable, and ever silent, the moral history of all unknown—produces very little effect, and the midnight heavens of modern astronomy become again, as to the eye of childhood, a mighty and terrible pageant or procession, the meaning and the purpose, the whither and the whence, of which we do not understand. And we are tempted to say to astronomers, as they prate of their new firmaments, and planets, and comets, "We know something like this long ago: can ye not give us some light on the meaning of these distant orbs, or read us off some worthy lessons of moral interest from that ever-widening but never-clearing page?" And to cry out to the stars, "Speak as well as shine, ye glorious mutes in the halls of heaven! Shed down on

some selected and favoured ear the true meaning of your mystic harmonies! Hieroglyphics, traced by the finger of God on the walls of night, when shall the Daniel arrive to interpret you, and to tell us whether ye contain tidings of hope or of despair? Star-gazers have looked at you long enough, and mathematicians weighed and measured you; when shall the eye—the Rossian eye of a true seer—lift itself up to your contemplation, and extract the heart of your mystery? If not, men may soon turn away from you in disappointment to the New Heavens, and look with as much hope on the bright foam-bells of an autumn ocean as on you, the froth of immensity.

Plato's opinions on medicine are next brought forward against him; and yet in nothing do we perceive greater proof of his profound sagacity. True, he pushes his views to excess; but under the veil of his extravagant statements we see an idea which is gaining ground—that medicine, as it began in, shall return to surgery; that, as a barber was the first, he shall be the last physician; that in a body as well as in a mind diseased the patient best ministers to himself; that the words, "Physician, heal thyself," may be freely rendered, "Cure thee of quackery, by ceasing to be a physician at all;" and that nature, strong in her own resources, coincides with Plato in crying out, "Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it."

Grasping always at the ideals of things, Plato saw that all true legislation must propound to itself a lofty end, and he proclaims that end to be the "virtue of the subject." This was the thought of Moses too, and the theocracy of Israel was its accomplishment. It were easy to prove that it was also the idea of Christ, although its realisation was *deferred*, and he did not at that time restore the kingdom to Israel. It is certainly the idea of millennial Christianity; but Mr Macaulay scouts it as Utopian, and prefers the line of legislation recommended by Bacon, and, alas! acted on by the majority of human governors, which has for its watchword the low word "well-being;" which acknowledges no virtues but industry and submission, and no God but Mammon; which is careful to regulate and derive revenue from stews, but never intermeddles with the education of souls; which tolerates every species of corruption, so long as it is profitable, and the money derived from it does not *smell;* which washes the outside of the platter, whitens the sepulchre, and decks the corpse, but neglects the weightier matters of the law—judgment, mercy, and faith; and seeks (not in vain) to divorce human legislation from Eternal Justice. Let the praises of Baconian legislation be sung by mightier voices than ours—by the whirlwinds of anarchy, the blood-red trumpets of revolution, the cries of tormented and fugitive slaves, and by that crash of all-existing governments which may result from the first thunder-step of Him who is to come, and who, in pronouncing doom against them, may make *this* the conclusive charge—"Ye did *not* make it the principal end of your legislation to make men virtuous; ye turned my Father's house into a house of merchandise, nay, a den of thieves; and ye must be scourged—*hence!*"

An antithetical comparison is introduced between the philosophy of Plato and that of Bacon, which, as it is short, we may quote:—"The aim of the Platonic philosophy was to exalt man into a god; the aim of the Baconian philosophy was to provide man with what he requires while he continues to be man. The aim of the Platonic philosophy was to raise us far above vulgar wants; the aim of the Baconian philosophy was to supply our vulgar wants. The former aim was noble; but the latter was attainable. Plato drew a good bow; but, like Acestes in 'Virgil,' he aimed at the stars, and, therefore, though there was no want of strength or skill, the shot was thrown away. His arrow was indeed followed by a track of dazzling radiance, but it struck nothing. Bacon fixed his eye on a mark which was placed on the earth, and within bow-shot, and he hit it in the white. The philosophy of Plato began in words, and ended in words; the philosophy of Bacon began in observations, and ended in arts."

Let us try a parallel on the other side of the question, which, if not so pointed, is much more true. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to make the dungeon of man's irrecoverable captivity as comfortable as possible; to ventilate it well, to loose everything except the chains, to cleanse the floors, clear the windows of cobwebs, and to whisper the while to the bondage, *Esto perpetua;* that of the Platonic was to set the lawful but hopeful prisoner free. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to cherish, expand, and cultivate the animal and intellectual nature of man; that of the Platonic was to strengthen and purify the spiritual, which is the germ of the Godhead in humanity. The aim of the Baconian philosophy was to "supply man's vulgar wants," and leave him content as a sated sloth with the supply; that of Plato was to suggest the thrilling thought, that there are instincts and wants in man which earth and time cannot satisfy, and which, with their silent uplifted fingers, point to immortality.

The aim of the Baconian philosophy was, even if *attainable*, not very *noble* — but attainable it was not, since the sensuous, as well as the spiritual, nature of man continually cries, "Give, give." Bacon's system, although it had a "New Atlantis," had no "Mahometan Paradise" annexed to it; the aim of Plato, partaking of the eternal, demands the field of the future for its development, and disdains the petty geographical gauges by which it has been hitherto tried. Plato "aimed at the sun," like Hercules of old; but Macaulay has not, with all his "thunder," broken the "shaft," which is still travelling upwards with unabated speed in the heaven-sent breeze of Christianity, and shall hit that far "White" in due time; Bacon's arrow has not pierced entirely through even his broad targe—this world. The "philosophy of Bacon began in observations, and ended in arts;" Plato's began in instincts, and shall end in a Daedalean crop of men.

Macaulay comes, in fine, to the question on which he lays most stress—that of the results of the two philosophies. On this point we have touched already, but must be permitted another word. Now, that many and wonderful results have sprung from the pursuit of the Baconian plan of philosophising, is conceded at once. But are they, after all, equal to the panegyrics bestowed on them? Are they not principally *mechanical?* Have they made man, as a whole, much happier, wiser, or better? What is "morality," or "moral obligation," without "grounds"—and Bacon has, according to Macaulay, laid down no such grounds. He says, "he loved to dwell on the power of the Christian religion, to effect much that the ancient philosophers only promised." This might have been only a compliment; and how easy it were to turn round and to say, "the objections to the ancient philosophy you urge, may be urged, with equal force, against the Christian faith. Where do we find the moral perfection at which it aimed?—where the faultless men it sought to produce? Has it not been a sublime failure?" And so we grant it has; unless you admit the facts of a great future, to which it points, and of a supernatural intervention, which it promises. And what we demand for Christianity, we demand also for the Platonic philosophy. Like it, it has done much, but not hitherto in proportion to the infinite scale it has itself fixed. Yet we are willing to weigh even its present products against Macaulay's elaborate list of the results of the Baconian method. "*That* has *lengthened* life" (Macaulay hopes, we suppose, to live longer than Methuselah!), "mitigated pain" (Christianity has no solace in it equal to chloroform!), "extinguished diseases" (by creating new ones), "increased the fertility of the soil" (to the benefit of the serf, eh?), "given new securities to the mariner" (the polar star shone and the needle trembled before Bacon was born), "spanned great rivers and estuaries with bridges of form unknown to our fathers" (what an achievement! the rainbow is nothing to it!), "lighted up the night with the splendour of the day" (was it not so also in the halls of Persepolis and the palaces of Babylon, or is all the glory of night in-

cluded in gas?), "extended the range of the human vision, accelerated motion, annihilated distance, facilitated intercourse, enabled man to descend into the sea, soar into the air, penetrate into the noxious recesses of the earth, traverse the land in cars without horses;" and so on he goes, like the hack orator at a Watt or Mechanics' Institute, through the wearisome round of railways, diving-bells, balloons, safety-lamps, &c. Splendid toys, truly! Childish things, fitting our present state of advancement. Nay, rather *conductors*, laid out and waiting for the electric influences of a better era. But to speak of them as *ends*, as objects, as living things, as aught but dead trifles, till the shadow of the divine be made to fall on them, and the power of the divine to propel them, and the spirit of the divine to animate them, is intolerable from one pretending to be a philosopher. We throw into the scale over against them the highest philosophy, poetry, and theology of the last two centuries in Britain, Germany, and America, all of which has been coloured by the genius, and more or less inspired by the spirit, of Plato, and also the deep spiritual effects and moral movements which have sprung from these, and ask which is likely to kick the beam. And, if it be said that we are unfairly adding Christianity as a make-weight to Platonism, we reply, that the one is, in our notion, the other fulfilled — the other *Deified*, yet practicalised; and that we have a right to rate the system we defend at its *best*.

The philosophy of Bacon has sounded the ocean, but it has ignored the profounder depth of the infinite in the soul of man. It has brought down the lightnings on its rod, but they have come reluctantly, and departed as much a mystery as ever. It has told the number, but not the meaning, of the stars, which roll on in their courses as inscrutable to us as they were to the Chaldean shepherds. Treating man as a cultivable ape, it has made his outward condition more comfortable; it hurries him along the path to his grave on railways; it smooths the harsh, outward edges of his intercourse with his fellow-man, but it leaves his heart as hard as it found it; it satisfies not, nor tries to satisfy, one of the deep thirsts of his moral nature. It has not cast a gleam of light upon the dark problems of his being, such as birth, sin, madness, or death. It casts not, nor seeks to cast, a ray upon the life beyond; it leaves a cloud of utter darkness upon his future progress on earth; and it neglects the care, if not denies the existence, of that immortal instinct which points up the poorest scion of humanity to his Father in heaven. It is of the earth, earthy; nor is that earth regarded as God's footstool, or as the springboard from which undying souls are to take their bound upwards, but as the eternal womb, homestead, and grave of certain erect compositions of clay, made, worked, and at last buried in night, by a mere mechanical power. Should* once more the Baconian appeal to the "Great Exhibition," and say, "Behold the triumph of my principles there," we answer, the splendour of the instance is granted; we saw there "the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, in a moment of time;" but not for the gift, instead of the sight, of all this magnificence, would we bend down before the golden calf. That exhibition was, after all, an exhibition of the works of *man's* industry; if we would see the works of God's industry, we must look elsewhere —to those books which his Spirit has inspired, and to those men who bear his image, and fight his battles. Millions flocked to see this great sight; but there are sentences in Plato, and far more in John, one of which is worth the whole magnificent medley. And yet, were a new truth of still greater profundity and grandeur, from the same source, inscribed upon a pillar, to be deciphered, and the existence of that pillar announced to the ends of the earth, how few would travel to try to read the same. So it is, but so it shall not always be. Nay, it appears to us that the Great Exhibition brought the Baconian system to a point—it pro-

* This was written when the Great Exhibition was going on in London.

duced all that it *could* do for humanity; and may not this bright pinnacle of human deed and skill have shone across the gulf, as a signal to the superior and supernatural power, seeing in it man's splendid impotence and gilded wo, to take his case, and the remainder of his otherwise hopeless destiny, by and by, into *his own* all-wise, powerful, and merciful *hands?* The cry of Plato was for an avatar, and a fuller revelation of the Deity. That was fulfilled in Christianity, but Christianity, in unison with creation, is beginning to cry aloud, in her turn, for a farther and a final apotheosis. The words of John Foster are seldom to be despised, and let both Baconian and Platonic Christian hear him with attention, as he says, "Religion is utterly incompetent to reform the world, till it is armed with some new and most mighty powers —till it appears in a *new* and *last* dispensation."

Our space is exhausted, else we would have had rich pickings of absurdity and weakness in the closing parts of Macaulay's Essay—where, for instance, he tells us gravely, "that the knowledge of the theory of logic has no tendency to make men good reasoners;" an assertion equivalent to "the knowledge of the theory of grammar has no tendency to make men good grammarians;" or, "a man may be a very good French scholar, without studying French;" or where he reduces Bacon's claims to absolute zero, by telling us that his "rules are not wanted, because, in truth, they only tell us to do what we are all doing;" or where, closing his estimate of what Bacon has after all done, he calls him a "person who first called the public attention to an inexhaustible mine of wealth, which had been utterly neglected, and was accessible by that road alone, and thus caused that road, which had been previously trodden by peasants and higglers" (Platos and Aristotles? nay, Johns and Pauls?), "to be frequented by a higher kind of travellers." By-ends Bacon, we suppose, Demas Dumont, Hold-the-World Bentham, Young-Atheist Holyoake, Feel-the-Skull Combe, and My-Lord-Timeserver Mr Macaulay.

THACKERAY.*

We do not intend to dwell in this paper on Thackeray's merits and defects as a writer of fiction, else we might have steered a course somewhat different from that of other critics; and while granting his great powers of humour, sarcasm, and interesting narrative, his rare freedom from cant, and his still rarer freedom from that tedious twaddle which disfigures the fictions of many writers of the present day, we might have questioned his true insight into, and conception of, Man, deplored his general want of spirituality, laughed over his abortive attempts—few, fortunately, as well as abortive—to be imaginative, and wondered with a great admiration at the longitude of the ears of those critics who name him in the same day with the author of "Rienzi," the "Last Days of Pompeii," the "Caxtons," and "Zanoni." But our business now is with him entirely as a critic, and his only work at present on our table is his series of lectures on the English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century.

We may, before opening our battery of objections, first premise, that, as a readable book, this has seldom been surpassed. Next to Macaulay and Hazlitt, he is the most entertaining of critics. You read his lectures with quite as much gusto as you do "Pendennis," and with infinitely more than you do such dull mimicry of the past as is to be found in "Esmond." Clever, too, of course, sagacious often, and sometimes powerful, are his criticisms, and a geniality not frequent in his

* Thackeray's "English Humorists of the Eighteenth Century." London: Smith & Elder, Cornhill.

fictions is often here. Sympathy with his subject is also a quality he possesses and parades; indeed, he appears as one born out of his proper time, and seems, occasionally, to sigh for the age of big-wigs and sponging-houses. Such are, we think, the main merits of this very popular volume. We come now to state its defects, and to contest a few of its opinions.

In the first place, Mr Thackeray errs grievously in the title of his volume. That professes to include solely the English Humorists; and yet we find in it the names of Congreve and Pope, neither of whose plays or poems, with all their brilliant wit, possessed a particle of humour; and of Steele, whose absurdities have indeed made him the "cause of humour" in others, and whose pathos is sometimes very fine, but whose attempts, whether at humour or wit, are in general lamentably poor. Had Mr Thackeray written a book on the "Humorists" of the *seventeenth* century, he would have inserted a chapter on "Butler and Milton:" Butler, for the mere wit of "Hudibras," and Milton, for the puns and quibbles of the rebel angels!

Secondly, Mr Thackeray much overestimates the size and splendour of the galaxy he has undertaken to describe. Again and again he speaks of the wits of Queen Anne as incomparably the brightest that ever shone in Britain. We dare not countersign these statements, so long as we remember the Elizabethan period, and the names of Shakspere, Sidney, Spenser, and Bacon; or the era of the two last Georges, and the names of Scott, Byron, Coleridge, and Wordsworth. In none of the worthies Thackeray has described do we find the element of true *greatness*. Swift was wondrously strong, but had no moral grandeur—like the fearful hybrids described in the Revelation, his power was in his tail, and with it he dealt out pain, like the torment of a scorpion when he striketh a man. Pope had rarest polish and point, but is seldom powerful, and never profound. Steele, Congreve, Prior, and Gay, were all *dii minorum gentium*. Addison, next to Swift, was incomparably the truest and most natural genius of his age; and yet does not appertain to the "first three." Thackeray quotes Pope as thinking Bolingbroke so superior to all other men, that when he saw a comet he thought it was a coach come for him. And well he might, if, as many used to believe, comets be launched from, and return to that "Other Place." But, as to his reputed powers, we recur to Lamb's inexorable principle —"Print settles all;" and renew the question Burke asked sixty years ago, "Who now reads Bolingbroke—who ever read him through?" To him, as to all deniers, more intellectual power than he deserved has been conceded. Had the "comet" carried away his works, it would have cost the world nothing, although Mallett (the "beggarly Scotchman" who "drew the trigger" of the blunderbuss of blasphemy) a great deal. That one man, Edmund Burke, might have been split up into a hundred Bolingbrokes; and yet no one was ever heard crying out for "A comet!" "a comet!" at his exit.

Thirdly, we quarrel with Thackeray for the manner and style in which he has chosen to issue his lecturing lucubrations. We do not know what others may think, but to us these lectures, in *manner*, seem elaborate imitations of the lectures on "Heroes and Hero-worship" by Thomas Carlyle. Now, the oddity and egotism which we must bear in Carlyle, we cannot bear in any imitator—not even in Thackeray. They have a *fade* and false air in him, and it takes all his talent to reconcile us to them.

Passing to the individual lectures, we are inclined to rank Swift as the best, as it is the first, of the series. None of Swift's former critics have so admirably represented the Irishman's emasculated hatred of man and woman—his soundless misery—his outer crust of contempt, in vain seeking to disguise the workings of his riven and tortured conscience—his disgust at the human race rushing up at last, as if on demon wings, into a denial of their Maker! We think that, as moral monsters, Swift, and that Yankee-Yahoo, Edgar Poe, must be classed together. Neither of them could believe that a race

which had produced *them* had any link relating it to the Divine. They saw all things and beings in the vast black shadow cast by themselves.

Thackeray knows how easy, cheap, and worthless a feeling toward a man like Swift MERE anger were. He has followed, therefore, in general, the milder and surer track of pity. He mourns over, as well as blames, the maimed and blinded Cyclops, that "most miserable of all human beings." He does not know, or at least he tries not to reveal, the secret of his wretchedness, although that, so far as physical causes are concerned, seems to us as transparent in the case of Swift as of Pope. We confess to a greater admiration for Swift, however, than for Pope. Swift was infinitely more a natural product than Pope; who, but for intense culture, would never have reached eminence at all. Pope used poisoned Lilliputian arrows; Swift directed at man and God a shaft like that described by old Chapman, which was

"Shot at the sun by angry Hercules,
And into shivers by the thunder broken."

Pope did wondrously with his sparkling and laborious couplets; Swift effected greater results with his careless, rambling rhymes, which seemed mere child's play, but which were the sport of a Titan, and often of the madman in Scripture, "casting firebrands, arrows, and death." Pope's hatred to man seems small, selfish spite, compared to that gigantic horror and disgust at his species which pursued Swift all his life. Pope, in a thin, cracked voice, squeaks out his irritated feelings; Swift howls them forth to earth and heaven. Pope was essentially and exquisitely small; his love is an intense burning drop; the dance of his fancy reminds you of that led by angels on the point of a needle; when in the convivial vein he tipples, it is in thimblefuls; his sarcastic sting is very sharp and very little, and he takes care never to spill an infinitesimal of the venom. Like Tom Moore after him, he is a poetic Homœopath, and, whether he try to kill you with laughter or to cure you by sense, he must deal in minute and intensely concentrated doses. When he invents, as in the "Rape of the Lock," it is a minute machinery of Sylphs and Gnomes; when he attacks, it is the dynasty of the "Dunces," that "small infantry;" when he examines works of art, it is through a microscope; when he describes love, it is that tiny, tortured mimicry of the great passion, exhibited by such nauseous beings as Eloisa and Abelard; and when he translates, he hangs cymbals on the stalwart arms of old Homer, and turns his majestic pace into a jingle of tinkling sound. Swift, on the other hand, was, if not truly great, immensely large; and even in his most careless verses you see a large black purpose—that, namely, of a wholesale libeller, who, as he said himself, loved many men, but hated man—looming through; and some of his veriest trifles make you tremble.

Thackeray, at page 15, says, "Swift's heart was English, and in England; his habits English, his logic eminently English; his statement is elaborately simple; he shuns tropes and metaphors; he has no profuse imagery." Here Thackeray is certainly mistaken. Swift had an exceedingly fertile fancy, and there are more memorable sentences, each carrying an image, from his pen, floating through literature, than from any other save Shakspere's. We do not say that his imagery is always, or very often, poetical, but it is always abundant, picturesque, pointed, and new. Thackeray has been deceived by Swift's coldness of manner. He does not shout "Eureka" over every whole truth or half truth he sees. His figures are all chased in lead. This at least is true of his later manner, except when his fury at man, as in the fourth part of "Gulliver," is fully roused, and when, as Thackeray well says, "it is Yahoo language; a monster gibbering shrieks and gnashing imprecations against mankind, tearing down all shreds of modesty, past all sense of manliness and shame; filthy in word, filthy in thought—furious, raging, obscene."

But in his earlier writings there is far more fire of style, as well as freshness of thought and richness of imagery. Wit-

ness the "Tale of a Tub." Well might he say in his old age, "Good God, what a genius I had when I wrote that book!" It is certainly his most astonishing production. It is the wildest, wittiest, wickedest, wealthiest book of its size in British literature. Talk of Swift having no "profusion of figure!" What would Mr Thackeray want more than he gets in the following paragraph:—"The most accomplished way of using books at present is twofold—either, first, to serve them as some men do lords—learn their titles exactly, and then brag of their acquaintance; or, secondly (which is indeed the choicer, the profounder, and the politer method), to get a thorough insight into the index by which the whole book is governed and turned, as fishes are by the tail. For to enter the palace of learning at the great gate, requires an expense of time and forms; therefore, men of much haste and little ceremony are content to get in by the back-door. For the arts are all in a flying march, and therefore more easily subdued by attacking them in the rear. Thus physicians discover the state of the whole body, by consulting only what comes from behind. Thus men catch knowledge, by throwing their wit on the posteriors of a book, as boys do sparrows, by flinging salt on their tails. Thus human life is best understood by the wise man's rule of regarding the end. Thus are the sciences found, like Hercules's oxen, by tracing them backwards. Thus are old sciences unravelled, like old stockings, by beginning at the foot." We do not vouch for the elegance of all these figures; but, in fertility, the passage equals Jeremy Taylor or Shakspere; and there are a hundred similar in the "Tale of a Tub."

That "Swift was a pious and reverent spirit," while in the very next paragraph we are told that he had put his "scepticism and apostacy out to hire," is rather a strange assertion. How can one who revels in filth and downright beastliness—whose miscellanies in verse are a disgrace to human nature—who flings ordure on that Schekinah of man's body, which God's Son entered and began to purify—who ran through the world shrieking that "man is utterly wicked, desperate, and imbecile"—who ruined the happiness of three females—who became, in his own words, little else than "a poisoned rat in a hole"—and who mocked and gibbered at the profounder mysteries of the Christian religion, be called "pious or reverent?" We are not the least charitable of critics; and we feel deep and solemn sorrow over the mass of ghastly ruin which Swift at last became: but we dare not apply to him epithets which would fit a Jack Wilkes, a Mirabeau, or a Tom Paine, as well as the miserable Dean of St Patrick's. More fitly and finely does Thackeray afterwards ask, "What had this man done? what secret remorse was rankling at his heart? what fever was boiling in him, that he should see all the world bloodshot? We view the world with our own eyes each of us, and we make from within us the world that we see. A weary heart gets no gladness out of sunshine; a selfish man is sceptical about friendship, as a man with no ear doesn't care for music. A frightful self-consciousness it must have been which looked on mankind so darkly through those eyes." All this sketch of Swift, indeed, with the exception of the statements we have exposed above, a few Carlylistic abruptnesses of style, such as "silence and utter night closed over him—an immense genius, an awful downfal and ruin," &c., is written with great pathos and energy; and if not so elaborate as Jeffrey's celebrated paper, breathes, we think, a truer and finer spirit.

His treatment of Congreve does not call for special remark, unless this—that we do not think him sufficiently severe on the immorality of that writer's plays. We pause with greater interest over the venerable name of Joseph Addison. There are many writers, as we have hinted before, who have taught us more, and whom we admire more, than Addison—many subtler, stronger, more complete, and profound; but there is scarce one, except John Bunyan, whom we love so well. He does not suggest much; but how he soothes! How soft and rich the everlast-

ing April of his style! By what green pastures and still waters does he lead us! What a tremble there is in his beautiful sentences, like that of a twilight wave just touched by the west wind's balmy breath! How he stammers out his mild sublimities; and how much does his stammer, like a beautiful child's, add to their effect! His piety, so sweet and shepherd-like; his kindness, so unaffected; his mannerism, so agreeable; his humour, so delicate, so sly, so harmless! What a contrast in spirit to Swift and Pope, who alone of his contemporaries could vie with him in popularity or power! We know no better way of rounding off a week's intellectual work, than amid the closing shadows of the Saturday evening to lift up Addison's serious papers, and to allow their honey to distil slowly upon our souls. Burke spent some of the last hours of his life in listening to Addison's papers on the Immortality of the Soul.

Thackeray by one word (a word we had applied to Addison years ere we ever read a line of the author of "Vanity Fair") gives the character of all that series of periodical literature, which included the "Tattler," the "Spectator," the "Guardian," the "Freeholder," &c.—he calls it "prattle." Both Steele and Addison were fine prattlers; only the prattle of Addison was directed to higher subjects. Steele prattled, often tattled rather, about politics, and the modes of the day, and the fair sex. Addison prattled about the stars, and the soul, and the glorious dreams of the Arabian heaven; and it seemed a divine prattle! A certain simple infantine ease and grace, which it were vain now to seek to reproduce, distinguished the language of both. We have mentioned the "Freeholder." This series, although so strongly recommended by Johnson, is now, we fear, but very little read. We only met with it a few years ago; but we can assure our readers that some of the most delectable titbits of Addison are therein contained. There is a Tory foxhunter still riding along there, whom we advise you to make up to, if you would enjoy one of the richest treats of humour; and there is a Jacobite army still on its way to Preston, the only danger connected with approaching which is, lest it kill you with laughter.

Well did Addison call himself the "Spectator." He could not *speak*, but only prattle in a delightful way. But he could *look* at all objects and persons, above, below, or around him, with a keen and quiet, a mild and most observant eye. Had he been as profound as he was wide, as eloquent and passionate as he was true, delicate, and refined, he had been our finest prose writer. We cordially coincide with our author's last paragraph:—"When he turns to heaven, a Sabbath comes over that man's mind, and his face lights up from it with a glory of thanks and prayer. His sense of religion stirs through his whole being. In the fields, in the town; looking at the birds in the trees, at the children in the streets; in the morning or in the moonlight; over his books in his own room; in a happy party—good-will and peace to God's creatures, and love and awe of Him who made them, fill his pure heart, and shine from his kind face. If Swift's life was the most wretched, I think Addison's was one of the most enviable. A life prosperous and beautiful—a calm death—an immense fame, and affection afterwards for his happy and spotless name."

Who has not heard of Sir Richard Steele? Wordsworth says of one of his characters—

> "She was known to every star,
> And every wind that blows."

Poor Dick was known to every spunging-house, and to every bailiff that, blowing in pursuit, walked the London streets. A fine-hearted, warm-blooded character, without an atom of prudence, self-control, reticence, or forethought—quite as destitute of malice and envy; perpetually sinning, and perpetually repenting; never positively irreligious, even when drunk, and often excessively pious when recovering sobriety—Steele reeled his way through life, and died with the reputation of having been an orthodox Christian,

and a habitual drunkard; the most faithless and most affectionate of husbands; a brave soldier, and an errant fool; a violent politician, and the best-natured of men; a writer extremely lively for this, among other reasons, that he wrote generally on his legs, flying, or meditating flight, from his creditors, and who embodied in himself the titles of his three principal productions — the "Christian Hero," the "Tender Husband," and the "Tattler;" being a Christian hero in intention—one of those intentions with which a certain place is paved; a "tender husband," if not a true one, in his conduct to his two ladies; and a "tattler" to all persons, in all circumstances, and at all times. But besides—and it is this which has made him immortal, and which he himself valued more than all personal fame—he was the friend and coadjutor of Addison. He called him in early to his aid, and found himself, he said, ruined by his ally, as the Britons were when they sought the assistance of the Saxons, a stronger power. It is utterly ridiculous, as Hazlitt and Hunt were wont, to prefer or equal Steele's papers to Addison's. They are more slipshod, indeed, and conversational; they reflect more literally the outer current of the then London life; they contain some very tender and some very picturesque touches, which seem sometimes like the lucky chance of a painter who drops or dashes his brush upon the canvas, and produces striking effects; but in matter, in polish, in delicacy and depth of humour, in beautiful fancy, or in graceful language, they can only be placed beside Addison's by the criticism of caprice, or by the power of prejudice. Steele has no artistic merits. His pathos is that of a fine fellow, maudlin after some great loss or reverse. His glee, as Thackeray well says, is that of a "box full of children at a pantomime." He has all Goldsmith's spirits and absurdities, without a tithe of his genius. His best sobriquet had been "Sir Richard, or Reginald Rattle." And how poor and needless in his critic to say, "Steele was not one of those lonely ones of the earth whose greatness obliged them to be solitary." He might as well have gravely assured us, that Swift was not George Herbert; nor Rochester, Milton; nor Goldsmith, Burke; nor the author of the "Book of Snobs," the writer of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm." Towards the close of the chapter, however, Thackeray has an admirable antithetical account of the manner in which Steele, Addison, and Swift have dealt with the one tremendous subject of death: Steele looking up to it with the awestruck face of a child—Addison looking down on it with a quiet, meditative, half-humorous eye—and Swift stamping on the tombstone, and crying, "*Fools, do you know anything of this mystery?*'

In his fourth lecture, after trifling very pleasantly with two ingenious triflers—Prior and Gay—he brings forward his whole strength to prove Pope the greatest literary *artist* that England has seen, "besides being the highest among the wits and humorists with whom we have to rank him," and the "highest among the poets," we presume of that period of poetry. And yet, ere he closes, he goes farther than this, and predicates of the passage which closes the "Dunciad," that it is the most "wonderful flight" of poetry, the "greatest height of the sublime art." He compares his early poems, such as the Pastorals, Windsor Forest, and the "Essay on Criticism," to the first victories of Napoleon!

'Pope has, to do him full justice, risen sometimes into the moral sublime; but to that highest form of writing, common in our great poets, which combines moral and material sublimity into one splendid yet terrible whole, in which grand images from nature flock around, and fall down before and combine to illustrate some high emotion of the soul or heart, he has never attained. The lines our author praises so warmly are, in our judgment, a mere hubbub of words, composed in equal proportions of mixed metaphors, bombast, and absolute nonsense. Yet perhaps our readers may prefer Thackeray's estimate conveyed in the following language:—

"It is the *brightest* ardour, the loftiest

assertion of truth, the most *generous* wisdom, illustrated by the noblest poetic figure, and spoken in words the aptest, grandest, and most harmonious. It is heroic courage speaking—a splendid declaration of righteous wrath; the gauge flung down—the silver trumpet ringing defiance; it is Truth the champion—it is a wonderful single combat!" Had Pope been alive, it would have taken all the counterweight, we fear, of "Pendennis" and "Vanity Fair," to have prevented him adding a codicil to the "Dunciad," and inserting in it the name of his most admiring critic.

The fifth lecture opens pleasingly on a subject ever fresh and delightful, at least to us—Hogarth, the greatest moral painter of the world. Thackeray, so far as he goes, discourses well on this great canvas-poet. We are no connoisseurs of the "serene and silent art;" nay, are apt to look with considerable contempt upon the jargon of painters, the most disgusting jargon in all the broad realms of pedantry. Our only question about paintings is, how much meaning and mind do they contain? how high do they prove the tide of soul to have risen in the artist? and how high do they raise it in us? And looking at Hogarth in this light, we dare pronounce him, with the exception of Michael Angelo and Raphael, the greatest painter that ever lived. Nay, perhaps, we should not have made these exceptions; for, if Michael Angelo wrought on more colossal materials, aimed at higher things, and reached a savage grandeur unknown to the Englishman; if Raphael was more graceful, holier in his purpose, more beautiful in his conceptions, and more delicate in his execution, Hogarth's power was magnified by the very coarseness of the materials he used, and by the very commonplace of the objects he painted. The gift of the first two resembled wealth; that of the third was alchymy. The two first went out, so to speak, to Australia, and collected its ore lying thick as morning dew; the third staid at home, and turned everything he saw into gold. Most of the peculiarly Shaksperian qualities were Hogarth's—wide sympathy, command of tears and laughter, subtle perception of analogies, unconscious power of bending all things into a common centre, and causing them to promote a common artistic object, so that a very fly murmuring in a room where a great tragedy is concocting or taking place, becomes an important element in the interest, and all "asides," however insignificant apparently, serve to point the moral, or to adorn the tale; and the irresistible introduction of beauty into the heart of terror, and along the side of the loathsome and the despicable, like the light that *will* shine in dark rooms after every candle has been put out, and every beam of day has been excluded—beauty which, in Shakspere, sows flowers upon the dreary crags of agony; and in Hogarth (a thing which Coleridge notices), brings in fine female faces into many of the coarsest and many of the darkest of his scenes, like embodied images of Eternal Love looking down upon sorrow, and sin, and rudeness, and vice, and silently whispering, "I bide my time." Even his Cock-Pit, his Gin Street, his Beer Lane, his Marriage à La Mode, his Rake's Progress, are all haunted by the heavenly face of angelic woman; just as, in Shakspere, Cordelia bends over the dying Lear, Ophelia murmurs her tender sympathy beside the wild speeches of the melancholy Hamlet, Miranda uplifts her sweet face amid the "Tempest," and Perdita, like a sunbeam, pierces the confused mistakes and miseries of the "Winter's Tale." Even more constantly than in Shakspere does this image of female loveliness pervade the prints of Hogarth; for while in them it is rarely absent, Shakspere has forgot to light up with its gentle ray such deep Nights of suffering and controversy as "Timon" and "Macbeth."

Following Hazlitt, Thackeray dwells lovingly on Hogarth's gusto, his rich repetition of thought, as in Marriage à La Mode, where "the Earl's coronet is everywhere: on his footstool, on which reposes one gouty toe turned out; on the sconces and looking-glasses; on the dogs; on his *very crutches*;"—his constant moral pur-

pose; the faithful picture his prints form of the age of the first Georges, and the comparison they suggest and enable us to substantiate between his and our own time, especially between the London of 1753 and the London of 1853. With the higher imaginative qualities of the great painter, such as those we have enumerated, he is not so familiar; and compared to the papers of Lamb and Hazlitt on the subject, his may be said to be such a sketch as Hogarth was wont to execute of his future pictures *upon his thumb nail*.

Smollett succeeds—a rough, roaring, ill-natured, and yet originally kind-hearted Scotchman of the last century, with three powers in extraordinary development: self-will, humour, and a certain strong poetical gift, which could only *be*, and was only now and then, *stung* into action. To see his self-will, in its last soured and savage state, let us consult his "Travels." He was the "Smelfungus" of Sterne, who travelled from Dan to Beersheba, and found all barren. We are among the very few who have read the book. It is a succession of asthmatic gasps and groans, with not a particle of the humour of "Humphrey Clinker." Among his novels, "Roderick Random" is the most popular, "Peregrine Pickle" the filthiest, "Sir Launcelot Greaves" the silliest, "Clinker" the most delightful, and "Ferdinand Fathom," in parts, the most original and profound. There is a robber scene in a forest, in this last novel, of prodigous power. His "Ode to Independence" should have been written by Burns. How that poet's lips must have watered as he repeated the lines,

"Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye,"

and remembered he was not their author! He said he would have given ten pounds to have written "Donocht-head;" he would have given ten times ten, if he had had them, poor fellow! to have written the "Ode to Independence." Thackeray, who is in chase of Fielding, finds nothing very new to say of Smollett, and ignores his most peculiar and powerful works. His best sentence about him is, that he went to London "armed with courage, hunger, and keen wits."

To Fielding he goes, *con amore*, and shows him as "he is, not cut in a marble toga, and draped and polished in a heroic attitude, but with inked ruffles, and claret stains on his tarnished laced coat, and on his manly face the marks of good-fellowship, of illness, of kindness, and of care." Fielding, sooth to say, was, even for that age, a sad scamp. Steele probably lived as dissipated a life, but Steele did not put his depravity in circulation by printing it in his books. When men come to *that*, it is a fearful symptom. Paul speaks of those who not only do ill themselves, but have *pleasure* in *them* that do it. Such is the case with authors who print their obscenities or blasphemies. They cannot write without reproducing their own vices. They roll them as a sweet morsel. By bestowing them on ideal characters, they multiply their own enjoyment of them. Their imagination has become so polluted, that it overflows on all their pages. They sometimes are actuated, it is to be feared, by a worse motive: they wish, namely, to make others as wicked and miserable as themselves. Bit by hydrophobia, they run about everywhere, with lolling tongues, in search of others to destroy. We do not think that this latter was Fielding's motive. He, in part from depraved taste, and in part from carelessness, simply transferred his own character to his novels. Mr Thackeray seems to us to overrate "Tom Jones" amazingly. It is a piece of admirable art, but composed of base materials, like a palace built of mud. "Amelia" is not so corrupt, but it is often coarse, and, as a whole, very poor and tedious. "Joseph Andrews" is by far the most delightful of his writings. With less art than "Tom Jones," it has much more genius. Parson Adams is confessedly one of the most original and pleasing characters in fiction. Goldsmith's Vicar of Wakefield, Joseph Cargill in "St Ronan's Well," are both copied from him, but have not a tithe of his deep simplicity and delicious *bonhommie*. We are disposed to think that, in a century hence, "Joseph Andrews" will alone survive,

to preserve Fielding's name. We wish Thackeray's plan had permitted him to say a little more of Richardson's Dutch style of novel-writing, and of those enormous books of his, reminding you of the full-bottomed periwigs of the past, in their minute and elaborate frizzle, and which yet, when shaken by the wind of passion, seem sometimes to nod as grandly as the "ambrosial curls" of Jove himself.

Sterne comes next, and his character meets with very severe and summary treatment—the more, perhaps, and deservedly, as he was a clergyman. As an author, he has been the father of an immense family of fiction-writers. Goethe has had him in his eye, both in the "Sorrows of Werter" and in "Wilhelm Meister." Rousseau derived a great deal from him. Jean Paul Richter, although possessing far more sincerity and depth of spirit, has copied his affected manner. The Minerva Press was long his feeble echo. Southey's "Doctor" was very much in his style; and the French novelists are still employed in imitating his putrid sentimentalism, although incapable of his humour and pathos. Plagiarist of passages, as he has been proved, he was, on the whole, an original writer; and, blackguard as he was, his vices, like those of Rousseau and Goethe, have contributed to the power and piquancy of his writings. We state this as a fact, not as a plea in his defence. He seems to have been not merely, like Fielding, a dissipated man, but, like Poe, a heartless scoundrel. It is a proof of the originality of his mind and style, that he arose and flourished in spite of cliques and coteries, and, as an author, lived and died alone. His works are now somewhat shorn of their popularity; but some parts of them, in eloquence, tenderness, and humour, are not surpassed in the English language. "Alas! poor Yorick!"

The best, and one of the finest sketches, is that of "poor dear Goldy," as Johnson used to call him. Goldsmith was one of the most amiable and most envious of men. He played with every child he met, and abused almost every contemporary author. Himself the most absurd of characters, he had the keenest perception of absurdities in others. He "wrote like an angel, and talked like poor Poll." He never wrote a foolish thing, and never said a wise one. He was at once Harlequin, and the good Samaritan. He divided again and again his last shilling with poor unfortunates, and told lies by the bushel. He had a keen sense of religion, and yet his life was in direct opposition to many of its precepts. Johnson said of him, "Dr Goldsmith was wild, sir; but *he is so no more*." Burke burst into tears at the news of his death. Reynolds, when he heard of it, painted no more that day. As a writer, he had a most enviable little garden-plot of reputation. We would rather have his fame than Homer's. What delight his one book, the "Vicar of Wakefield," has given! What shouts, screams, sweats of laughter, have his plays elicited! How many hearts his "Deserted Village" has melted within them! How many thousands in foreign lands,

> "Remote, unfriended, melancholy, slow,
> Or by the lazy Scheldt or wandering Po,"

have repeated the noble lines of the "Traveller," and blessed its queer, kind-hearted author!

Thackeray closes with some striking remarks, attempting to show that the calamities of authors are, in general, owing, not to the neglect of the public, but to themselves. There is much truth in what he says. Literary men have been often improvident and immoral; but this, while it has sometimes proceeded from perverted tastes, has often also proceeded from the precariousness of their profession. Literary men, however industrious and regular, are wretchedly underpaid; and except when they have another profession, or a private fortune, are poor. *None*, speaking generally, they are men of respectable characters, and of working habits; and yet, does one out of ten of them die, without subscriptions being organised for behoof of their wives and children? We blame not the booksellers: they cannot be expected, taking them as a whole, to look at the matter except in a commercial point of view; but we blame, first of all,

the government, or not devoting more of the public money to pensions, prizes, and similar rewards of literary merit; and, secondly, the public, which, while spending so much upon degrading vices, or foolish frivolities, or mere passing and ephemeral light literature, has so little to spare for works of genius, and gives what little it does give, with an air of such supreme contempt, or such condescending patronage, or such sublime indifference.

In fine, although we have been compelled often to differ from our author, we thank him for the pleasure we have derived from his work, and especially for the opportunity it has afforded us of re-treading a very delightful field in British literature.

LORD BROUGHAM.

Brougham is an isthmus, uniting two times. He belongs partly to the past, and partly to the present. In his habits, intellectual and moral, he is of the eighteenth century; in many of his views and feelings, he is the man of his own era. While Coleridge and Carlyle are the prophets of the coming age, the events of which will expound much that is obscure in their deliverances, Brougham seeks only, at the light of the past, to live and move in the present. Well aware of the feebleness of comparisons as gauges of character, we may yet call him a composite of Burke, Chatham, and Fox. Without the subtlety, profusion, and poetry of the first, he has something like variety of lore, and his power of making it all, though gathered from the remotest regions, strictly subservient to the purpose in hand. With less simplicity of language, straightforwardness of purpose, condensation of power, and energy of will, than Lord Chatham, he has much of his piercing sarcasm, his dash of charlatanism, his commanding air, and his impetuosity of temper. Like him, too, while steadfast to certain great principles, he is apt to shift and veer about in matters of minor importance, and is altogether incapable of acting in concert with inferior men. He seems made for an arbitrary sovereign, and is a colossus at once in size and solitude. He has the social disposition, without the *bonhommie* of Fox; his energy, but not his vehemence; his knowledge, strong sense, and fine constitution, but not that childlike simplicity, that transparent earnestness, that utter absence of the black and bilious passions, that frank and generous temperament, that forgetfulness of self, which made even Burke, in the depth of their disagreement, to declare that he was "made to be loved."

We confess that we are a little sceptical as to the truth of the common panegyries on Brougham's encyclopædiac knowledge. We will not say with one, while he was Lord Chancellor, "that if he only did know a little law, he would have a smattering of everything;" but, in the first place, as to its variety, we doubt if he has thoroughly mastered more than two or three of the main branches of knowledge. He knows politics; he knows mathematics; he knows jurisprudence; he has the languages of Greece and Rome, and of modern Europe, like a bunch of keys slung to his girdle; and with literature, past and present, he is a little more conversant than the average of well-educated men. But that beyond the circle—wide as it certainly is—which we have thus described, his knowledge extends very far, we have never seen any satisfactory proof. Perhaps, indeed, in society, from the fluency of his conversation, and the exceeding quickness with which his mind moves, he may pass for a man of nearly universal acquirements. We are still more sceptical as to the *depth* of his information. Where, since we are required to put him in the very topmost class of men, are the overpowering evidences? As a scholar, what pyramidal pile of learning has he accumulated? As

a writer, where is his "Novum Organon," or his "De Augmentis Scientiarum;" his "Mechanique Celeste," his "Divine Legation," or his "Lives of the Poets;" his "Paradise Lost," or his "Excursion?" He has, indeed, cast strong and startling light upon many old truths. He has given to impulses created by others the prodigious momentum of his influence, eloquence, perseverance, and ardour. He has said, and written, and done things singular and imposing. He has accumulated a mass of miscellaneous and most available knowledge. He has, in the departure or obscuration of greater luminaries, filled a large space in the political, scientific, and literary horizon. And he has cast over all his powers, and acquirements, and motions, a triple glare of genius, eccentricity, and restlessness, which have surrounded him with the interest, uncertainty, and terror of a comet.

The grand feature of Brougham's mind is energetic and elevated sense. Subjected long to severe mathematical training, he loves the plain, the practical, and the tangible. For the visionary he has no taste; for the subtle no faculty. Through all the labyrinthine coils and thick parentheses of his voluminous periods, you trace the strong line of a clear and manly reason. Coupled with this is a considerable gift of comprehension. He strives to exhaust every subject with which he meddles. It unrolls gradually, though swiftly, before his view, like a map of atlas proportions, not like a "banner bright that is unfurled before him suddenly." He has added, it need scarcely be said, no new or large truth to the stock of human knowledge. As an orator he speaks with a tone of authority. An eloquent dogmatism breathes in his every sentence. You feel that this man sees his subject through and through; has mastered all its bearings; has rolled it over in his mind as a "pebble in the ocean." His general speech is on a conversational key. This masterly ease is the result of early and patient toil, of invincible perseverance, more than of original genius, but this does not much detract from the effect—an effect increased by the inscrutability of his features; which, though sharp and angular, conceal more meaning than they enunciate: the deep-sunk lightnings of his eye; the iron massiveness of his forehead; the saturnine swarthiness of his complexion; the meaning twitch of his cheek; and the clearness, flexibility, and power of a voice, over which his command is supreme, and which runs parallel with every movement of his sentences, and echoes every passion of his soul. And those who have seen him in his "loftier mood," not now calmly bestriding, but fairly caught in the wind of his spirit—his face brightened into full and fierce meaning—his eye shining like a pit of fire suddenly disclosed—his arms vibrating like sharp tongues of flame in the blast—his brow darkening like iron in the shade—his form dilating to his dilating soul—his voice now exalted to a harrowing shriek, and now sunk to a rasping and terrible whisper—those (and their number is now comparatively few) can alone tell how the promise of his calmer moments is amply fulfilled, and the word "orator" seems to flame around his every look and gesture, word and movement. Hazlitt has, in the "Spirit of the Age," treated Brougham as the representative of the Scottish school of oratory, and drawn a very ingenious parallel between it and the Irish, giving the preference to the latter. It appears to us that he is rather a composite of the English and the Scottish, and unites the passion and boldness of John Bull to Sawney's carefulness, plodding perseverance, intense practicality, and instinctive common sense. He has little of the Irishman about him, except his irritable and impetuous temper; little of his bursting, bungling humour; less of his wild pathos; and less still of his fervid fancy. His wit is apt to darken into sarcasm, or to kindle into invective; his pathos is the feeblest of his powers; and his imagination, though vivid and strong, is never rich or poetical. Inflamed intellect is the brief and comprehensive description of his oratory. His sarcastic vein is as deep and dark a channel as ever the gall of a proud and powerful spirit found for itself.

His sarcasm is equally compounded of irony and invective,

"Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
That on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust."

His irony is not cold and stern, but fierce and hot. His invective is slow, measured, winding, indirect, accumulating gradually round its hapless victim. The garment he wraps round his enemy is of simplest drapery, and most voluminous folds; but it is the shirt of Nessus. Like a boa-constrictor, he rolls himself slowly round his prey: first covers it from head to foot; administers then a fearful warmth; then beslavers it with portentous flattery; then gradually crushes in its sides; and then, with a fiendish ease and glee, devours it. And though humour be a quality he possesses not, he can at times shed a wild gaiety over the darker motions of his mind, like stray and stormy sunshine on the troubled waters of a tarn, rather discovering than relieving the gloom. We do not profess much admiration for his far-famed going down on his knee, as he said, "My lords, I implore you to pass this bill." We fear it was a trick, though, sitting as cool criticisers, we are, perhaps, scarcely qualified to decide whether it did not grow naturally out from, and, as it were, point and round off, the excitement of the speaker and the audience. If it did, it was undoubtedly a graceful and magnificent attitude; far better, certainly, than that absurd dagger of Burke, which some have professed to admire. Had Burke, indeed, worn, as was customary in his youth, a sword, and, as the climax of one of his anti-Gallican harangues, drawn and flourished it in the eyes of the astonished House, it had been a natural and noble conductor to the excited feelings of such a man; and one would have recalled the words of Milton—

"He spake, and, to confirm his words, out flew
Millions of flamings words, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty cherubim: the sudden blaze
Far round illumined hell."

But to purchase a weapon at a cutler's—to hide it in his breast—to watch his opportunity, and curve, in the majestic wave of his eloquence, to a point where he might, with some appearance of keeping, dash it down upon the floor—it was a hideous anti-climax—the trashiest claptrap on record: unworthy of a Robespierre, how much more of a Burke!

Altogether—though in the Houses of Parliament there are, or were, some deeper philosophers; two or three more accomplished debaters; several scholars more erudite; many lawyers more profound; more elegant rhetoricians; much wittier men; a few who excel him in bursts of imaginative eloquence; one or two who, in refinement, if not bitterness of sarcasm, approach very near him;—as an orator—a mind-compeller—a wielder of Periclean thunders—a living power of irresistible influence, swaying the souls and bodies of intelligent men, Henry Brougham stands, *or stood*, alone.

As an author, he has written books, pamphlets, and critiques. While very young, he produced a work on colonies, which, though little read now, showed his comprehensive grasp and reach of information. He is the author, too, of various papers on science, inserted in the Records of the Royal and other societies; of a prefix to Paley, in which, amid many errors and inaccuracies, "and tares of haste," he discovers all his fertility of intellect and abundance of knowledge on a subject which seemed out of his line; of an introduction to the "Library of Useful Knowledge," which is written in a style resembling Cobbett's best and most popular manner, being strongly simple in thought, and transparently clear and familiar, without coarseness, in language; of many articles in the "Edinburgh Review;" and, finally, of that "Collectanea Majora"—the collection, by himself, of his leading speeches. Brougham in this has done what few of the mighty dead have been permitted to do—what Demosthenes, Bolingbroke, Chatham, Fox, Pitt, Sheridan, and Canning did not, and, more fully, what Cicero and Burke did—namely corrected, condensed, subjected to the revision of his own after eye, and illustrated from the resources of his own

teeming mind, the oratory of his life—erected his monument before his death—arrested all the accents of his own floating breath into forms of marble beauty and marble permanence—had the hardihood to anticipate the work of ages, by brushing away from his own speeches the delusive and enlarging haze of tradition and immediate effect, and leaving them, as they are, in fixed proportions and solid greatness.

Thus collected, his speeches unquestionably stand in a very high rank of oratorical masterpieces. They contain individual passages of powerful eloquence, rhetoric, debate, logic; besides condensed quantities of information brought powerfully to bear upon particular subjects, and a mass of masculine sense, variegated by sharp flings of sarcasm, and illustrated by a spray of wit, and seasoned by tart peculiarities of temper and language, which render them in their collected form one of the richest legacies which the genius of oratory has of late bequeathed to the unborn time.

Brougham is "nothing if not critical." His mind, turn it to law, literature, politics, or science, is essentially critical. His intellect is an universal tribunal, before which men, authors, jurists, mathematicians, poems, political treatises, pictures, books of travels, manuals of education, problems, &c., compear, are scrutinised, and pass on. Instead of profoundly exploring, he vigorously remarks. Like the Abyssinian cattle-drivers, he makes stern incisions, and cuts out quivering pieces from his subject, rather than dissects and disembowels the whole. He penetrates like a knife, he does not *inter*-penetrate like oil. His judgment of books is scarcely so much to be depended on as his verdicts on man. That is often hasty, harsh, and unconsidered, as witness his review of Byron's "Hours of Idleness;" these are generally true as they are vivid. His recent portraits of Fox, Pitt, Castlereagh, George IV., &c., prove him a bold, minute, faithful, stern, yet generous limner. Gall still holds its place in his box of colours, but is woudrously faded from its first fierce tints. His portraits are clear, direct, drawn with fearless fidelity of touch, and much fulness of characteristic detail. They resemble, both in the manner and the judgments pronounced, the criticisms published posthumously of Sir James Mackintosh, but are more energetic, and less encomiastic.

As a barrister, Brougham enjoyed a place founded more upon his known abilities in other departments, than on any special adaptation to that somewhat jealous and exclusive sphere where sits the stern goddess of law. In all that concerned the minute and plodding details, the knowledge of precedents, the power of drawing subtle and almost invisible distinctions, he was surpassed by a large class, with Lord Abinger at their head. Law, more than any other science, from the multiplicity of its details, the technicality of its terms, the evasive nature of its distinctions, and the vast space which its records cover, demands the whole man. But, while Brougham has never narrowed down his wide mind to such an exclusive devotion as Themis would require, never shone as a special pleader, no barrister approached him in the rapid mastery with which he tore out the heart of a case, the dexterous energy with which he managed it, the clever charlatanism by which he made his wit, or his eloquence, or his ribaldry, or his abuse, supply the lack of his information, the pincer-like power of the machinery by which he squeezed out truth, or fun, or both, from witnesses, the lustre which his genius elicited from the dry wood and very rottenness of legal detail, or in his knowledge and application of the great leading principles of jurisprudence, gathered from the devout study of Bentham, the demigod of the science, but made his own by the workings of his restless understanding. A pleading in his hands, instead of being a cold and sapless document, full of quibbles, small sophistries, and other crooked things, became an animated and interesting production, crowded with information, passion, glancing lights, flung now back and now forward, and eloquence of a masculine although somewhat laboured character.

When Chancellor, Brougham made up for the want of minute technical lore, by prodigious exertions, both of mind and body. His exercise of the patronage (lay and clerical) of that high office itself, sufficed to prove, that here was seated on the woolsack no cold cast-iron figure, but a man. It was great in him, upon reading a small volume of poems, to obey the instant impulse, and bestow a living upon the author of the "Village Poorhouse." Such a deed blended a warm beam of love with our admiration. It needed this to cover his sins against the dignity of English law, personified in his office—the indiscreet personalities in which he indulged—the wild wit by which he shook the woolsack from its propriety, and the "strange fire" which he now and then presented on that solemn altar where he ministered as high-priest.

As a leader, he has laboured under a twofold disqualification. In the first place, he never served a regular training to the trade—passing from under the banners of Tierney to those of Canning, and afterwards of Grey, he only for a very short time led the opposition; and, like all men of impetuous impulse, he is too rapid in his motions, too fiery in his blood, too abrupt in his turns, too self-centred in his conscious might, too capricious in his temper, and too progressive in his opinions, to be a trustworthy guide. No man of exalted genius was ever a good leader, or ever had a powerful train behind him. Chatham was a dictator, not a leader. Burke, during his life, had no out-and-out followers, save Windham, who was rather one of a constellation Gemini. Fox was better at attacking the other party, than in leading his own. Canning gained his richest trophies while Liverpool was at the helm. It is your acute, clear-headed, cautious, common-sense man, like Sir Robert Walpole, that weathers the storm.

Besides all this, the versatile being under notice is, we are told, a great talker—the life and ornament of society. Manifold, be sure, the subjects of his conversation. Like Talkative in the "Pilgrim's Progress," he can speak about things terrestrial and things celestial, things moral and things profane. He has talked of law with Eldon, of literature with Jeffrey, of fluxions with Leslie, of astronomy with Arago, of bullion with Horner, of orthodoxy with Sidney Smith, of cause and effect with Thomas Brown, of the Oriental tongues with Leyden, of border ballads with Scott, of jurisprudence with Bentham, of moral philosophy with Mackintosh, of the evidences of Christianity with Dr Andrew Thomson, who found him, it is said, on that subject alone disposed to shirk; of the Voluntary question with Dr Harper of Leith; of humanity with Clarkson and Romilly, the latter of whom, when requested on one occasion to edit a book, pleaded want of time, but said, "Take it to that fellow Brougham; he has time for everything;" and of pulpit oratory with Robert Hall, whom Mackintosh took him to hear—whom he pronounced the most eloquent of orators—requested after sermon to be introduced to—proceeded to compliment on the discourse, till checked by Hall's asking, "But what of the subject, sir? What think you of it, sir? Was it the truth of God, sir?"—words very characteristic of the great preacher, while still steaming with the excitement, and absorbed in the interest of his theme. Of Brougham's talk, we can speak only by report. It is said to be singularly abundant, lively, and rapid, touching a vast variety of topics with light, firm, hurrying finger, at times flaming up into eloquence, and generally testifying a rich mind under rare excitement. He is not a lecturer, like Coleridge; nor a hatcher of bon-mots, like Sidney Smith; nor an elaborate discusser of given topics, like Mackintosh; nor a riotous spirit, pouring out its riches in splendid confusion, like Curran; nor an oracle coiled up in the corner of a drawing-room, like Wordsworth. Brougham's talk, like that of Burke and Wilson, is just the involuntary discharge of a full mind. His face is the "ugliest and shrewdest of human faces." Far from a fine, and scarcely a striking face, it has a uniqueness of expression seldom seen;

thought, as of centuries of common minds, is written on it in worn characters—it scrutinises all, while defying scrutiny itself—its famous twitch palpitates out the eternal restlessness of the man—intellect is inscribed upon the brow—passion lurks within the whole; and now and then, as we have often been told, from the soul within the eye darts forth an expression which has an almost withering, blinding, blasting effect upon the beholder.

This is not the place, nor, in truth, is the time yet come, for forming a final judgment upon the character of Brougham, as a whole—for fully estimating the influences which he has scattered around him during his career—for weighing his faults and excellencies in an even balance—or for settling the precise room he will fill up in the great general gallery of ages, and therefore we beg leave to decline making the attempt.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

FIRST SITTING.

CONCEIVE a small, pale-faced, wo-begone and attenuated man opening the door of his room in ——— Street, advancing towards you with hurried movement and half-recognising glance; saluting you in low and hesitating tones, asking you to be seated; and after he has taken a seat opposite you, but without looking you in the face, beginning to pour into your willing ear a stream of learning and wisdom as long as you are content to listen, or to lend him the slightest cue. Who is it? 'Tis De Quincey, the celebrated Opium-eater, the friend and interpreter of Coleridge and Wordsworth, the sounder of metaphysic depths and the dreamer of imaginative dreams, the most learned and most singular man alive, the most gifted of scholars, the most scholar-like of men of genius. He has come from his desk, where he has been prosecuting his profound researches, or, peradventure, inditing a lively paper for "Tait," or a recondite paper for "Blackwood." Your first feeling, as he enters, is, Can this be he? Is this the distinguished scholar? Is this the impassioned autobiographer? Is this the man who has recorded such gorgeous visions, seen by him while shut up in the Patmos of a laudanum phial? His head—how can it carry all he knows? His brow is singular in shape, but not particularly large or prominent: where has nature expressed his majestic intellect? His eyes—they sparkle not, they shine not, they are lustreless: nay, they have a slight habit, the one of occasionally looking in a different direction from the other; there is nothing else particular about them; there is not even the glare which lights up sometimes dull eyes into eloquence; and yet, even at first, the *tout ensemble* strikes you as that of no common man, and you say, ere he has opened his lips, "He is either mad or inspired."

But sit and listen to him; hear his small, thin, yet piercing voice, winding out so distinctly his subtleties of thought and feeling; his long and strange sentences, evolving like a piece of complicated music, and including everything in their comprehensive sweep; his interminable digressions, striking off at every possible angle from the main stream of his discourse, and ever returning to it again; his quotations from favourite authors, so perpetual and so appropriate; his recitation of passages from the poets in a tone of tremulous earnestness; his vast stores of learning, peeping out every now and then through the loopholes of his small and searching talk; his occasional bursts of enthusiasm; his rich collection of anecdote; his uniform urbanity and willingness to allow you your full share in the conversation. Witness all this for an hour together, and you will say at the close, "This is the best living image of Burke and Coleridge—this is an ex-

traordinary man." You sit and listen, and, as the evening steals on, his sentences get longer and longer, and yet your inclination to weary gets less and less. Your attention is fixed by hooks of steel, and at three in the morning you rise unsatiated. You leave him on his way to his desk, to study till peep of dawn; and, going home, your dreams are haunted by the curious man, and you seem still to hear him, with his keen, low voice, out-Kanting Kant, or out-mystifying Coleridge, or demolishing some ricketty literary reputation, or quoting, in his deep and quiet under-tone, some of the burning words of Shelley or Wordsworth.

De Quincey has a powerful but imperfect mind. In one sense, indeed, it seems one of the most well-furnished of understandings. It has imagination in a high measure. It has a still larger share of sympathy with the imagination of others. It has a most subtle and searching intellect. It has varied information. It has a dictatorial command of language. Where, then, lies its imperfection? It lies, we think, in the want of unity and proper compactness among his various faculties. They are all powerfully developed, but not properly balanced. The consequence is, that the one sometimes usurps the province of the other. He sometimes declaims when he should analyse, and sometimes analyses when he should describe. And hence, too, all his efforts have been fragmentary—each fragment colossal, indeed, and, so far as it goes, finished (for it is easy distinguishing the rude fragment of a rock from the splinter of a statue), but still a fragment. He has produced no perfect and consummate whole. This was to be expected in his autobiographical sketches, but we find it pervading all his writings, and his only completed work of art ("Klosterheim") is a complete failure. Perhaps the necessities of his lot, and his late unfortunate propensity, account for this. Perhaps, also, there is, amid his endowments, an infirmity of purpose, one weak place which has damaged the whole, one leak in the stately vessel, which has, if not sunk it, at least abridged its voyages, and lessened its power. The "Confessions of an Opium-Eater" took the public by storm. Its popularity was immediate and boundless; nor, even yet, has it declined. The copy of it we first read was from a circulating library, and had nearly crumbled away. The sources of its success were obvious enough. First of all, the thing was written with prodigious force and spirit. People who judge of De Quincey's style from his contributions to "Tait" and "Blackwood," have no proper idea of it. There, generally, the "line labours, and the words move slow." It is the noble charger jagged and worn out. In the "Confessions," he is seen rioting in his strength. In his magazine articles, the effort is visible; while the "Confessions" are sketched with a pencil of fire. The starvation scenes in London; the story of Ann, the poor street-stroller, who saved his life, and whom, in the strong gratitude of his heart, he would pursue into the central darkness of a London brothel, or into the deeper darkness of the grave; and, above all, the horrors of opium, and the sublime and dreary visions with which it drugged his spirit, were told so graphically, and with such easy and energetic skill, that they set him immediately at the head of the long list of those who have shown their moral and spiritual wounds to the pity and wonder of the passers-by. They wanted the *bonhommie* of Augustine, the minute and passionate anatomy of Rousseau, the quaint and literal vigour of Charles Lamb; but they were free from the indelicacy of the repentant father; they were not sullied by the affectation and blasphemy of Jean Jacques; they treated a topic more attractive than Elia's "Confessions of a Drunkard," and gave glimpses of a learning more profound, and a genius more daring, than any of the three. There was another reason. The practice of opium-eating was then little known in England ('tis otherwise now), and was invested with an Oriental haze of romantic interest. It was regarded as Turkish tobacco; and, viewed in this mild light, the confessions of one who indulged in it awakened instant curiosity and attention. Besides, many

thought it a novel, and read it with avidity as an agreeable change from Colburn's last. But, whatever were the reasons, popular the book was, and popular it deserved to be, whether we look to its moral or literary value, whether we regard it as a most faithful and impressive statement of the evils of the particular indulgence, or as a picture of a nature originally noble, suffering, in such circumstances as may never occur again (to use his own words), "a dire eclipse, and labouring in a dread extremity." Probably many thousands have had dreams as strange as those of De Quincey, but few could have described them as he has done—could have retained and expressed on paper their slumbrous charm—preserved their volatile and evanishing interest—dipped his pen in their unearthly gloom, and voiced forth that feeling of unutterable mystery, which makes the dreaming land so terrible and dear to all imaginative spirits. To this even their fragmentary character contributed; for as a bust gives us, from its abrupt termination, an idea of the infinite which a full-length statue never can suggest; so dreams best retain their mystic power when reflected as on the pieces of a broken mirror, and described in gasps of shuddering recollection.

Perhaps the continuation of these disclosures, recently published, and entitled, "Suspiria de Profundis," is still finer. Sighs, truly wails and bitter groans they are, from the depths of his incommunicable misery, sounding like notes of the pibroch borne on the breeze as on a bier, and eloquent and earnest beyond all his former earnestness and eloquence.

Next to the "Confessions," it is by his articles in periodicals that De Quincey is best known to the literary world. They consist partly of translations, and partly of original articles. Among the more prominent of the former, we recollect some translations from Jean Paul in the "Old London Magazine," and some from Lessing in "Blackwood." His knowledge of the literature of Germany is extensive; his judgments upon it discriminating. He has not that blind and ignorant hatred of all that is German, which was manifested even by such men as Dugald Stewart and Sir William Drummond, but neither has he the almost idolatrous feelings of Moir and Carlyle. He strikes, we think, a fair and fine medium, and we love him for preferring Richter to Goethe. But why does he not prefer Schiller to both—Schiller, the most lovely character, the most heroic spirit, and the most exalted genius of his country?

To enumerate all his original articles, within reasonable bounds, were a vain attempt. He has written some droppings of criticism in the "Old London;" among others, a paper on the Knocking in "Macbeth," which is much admired (unfortunately, however, we believe, the scene thus eloquently criticised is now discovered to be an interpolation! no matter!); many masterly papers in the "Encyclopædia Britannica;" laboured articles in "Blackwood" on history and political economy by the thousand, amid which a series on the Cæsars stands prominent; several *jeux d'esprit* in the same magazine, among others, the far-famed "Lecture on Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts," since continued by him unsuccessfully; and not a few papers on Hannah More, Animal Magnetism, &c., besides his autobiographies, in "Tait." His general character as a periodical writer may be summed up in a few words. He is remarkable, first of all, for the most decided and dogmatical assertion of his opinions. Were it not for the stores of learning by which he is manifestly backed, and for the visible and constant play of a strong intellect, you would charge him with extreme and offensive arrogance. As it is, you know not sometimes whether more to admire the acuteness, or to wonder at the acerbity, of his strictures. He throws a paradox at you like a sledge-hammer—he pulls down a favourite idol with as little ceremony or remorse as you would snap a poppy which has shed its flowers. Witness his onset, in the "London," at Grotius, or, as he perversely persisted in calling him, Groot, from which, we fear, the fame of that greatly overrated personage never can recover. Wit-

ness his perpetual sneers at Parr, and all that class of mere scholars! Witness the abating process he so dexterously applied to Watson, and with less success to Roscoe, and with least of all to Goethe! Nor does this habit spring from any feeling like envy, or the desire to detract. De Quincey is altogether above such feelings; but the truth is, the current of his literary sympathies, though strong as a cataract and profound as an abyss, is narrow as a footpath. He is too much engrossed in the admiration of two or three models of supreme excellence, to have much to spare for aught inferior. He has studied Kant too closely to care much for Paley, and appreciated Wordsworth too intensely to admire the poetry of Moore. Another characteristic of his criticism is its conversational cast; and hence its endless digressions, and its imperfect and unfinished character; and yet hence, too, its interest and its ease. His philosophy may be called a sublime gossip; and finely doth she chirp over her cups, and garnish the most abstruse speculations with tit-bits of literary scandal, and with a rich anecdotage, teeming from the stores of a most circumstantial memory. In all his writings, we find a lavish display of learning. You see it bursting out, whether he will or no; never dragged in as by cart-ropes: and his allusions, glancing in all directions, show, even more than his direct quotations, that his knowledge is encyclopædiac. His book of reference is the brain. Nor must we forget his style. It is massive, masculine, and energetic; ponderous in its construction, slow in its motion, thoroughly English, yet thickly sprinkled with archaisms and "big words," peppered to just the proper degree with the condiments of simile, metaphor, and poetical quotation; select, without being fastidious; strong, without being harsh; elaborate, without being starched into formal and false precision. Its great faults are an air of effort, and a frequent use of scholastic terms and the forms of logic. It is, as nearly as may be, the vehicle of his strong, subtle, fiery, and learned nature. Nor does it disdain frequently to express an elephantine humour—more rich and racy, however, than choice or delicate. It is a style, in short, adapted well for pure metaphysical discussion—better still for philosophical criticism and biography—and perhaps best of all for the sublime yet shifting purposes of some large national history.

We refer those who doubt his capacity for this last undertaking, to a description he has written of the Exodus of a Tartar tribe from their native land to the paternal sway of the Emperor of China, which they will find in "Blackwood" for July, 1837, which, however, they will in vain seek *in full* in any other quarter, but which, for broad and massive grandeur of historical depiction, we have never seen surpassed. In fact, the man has hitherto done comparatively nothing with his powers. In common with all who know him, we deem him to have been capable of the loftiest things, whether in the field of psychology, or in more verdant and popular regions. Especially was he qualified, by his classical learning, by the taste and tendency of his mind, by the graver graces of his diction, by his intimacy with the spirit and philosophy of Roman story, and by his belief in the Christian faith, for the proud task of writing the history of the Fourth Monarchy. Gibbon, no one knows better than De Quincey, has not nearly exhausted the magnificent theme. He is, no doubt, a great, strutting, splendid writer, rolling on his large periods, scattering his fiery sneers, mouthing out his oracular dogmatism, and spreading forth the riches of his ostentatious learning. But his work is not only disfigured by the blue and blistering venom of scepticism; not only does it keep up a bitter, running fire against the blessed faith of Christ, from every corner and point, in the great guns of the celebrated two chapters, in the glancing side-fire of the text, and in the base bush-fighting of the notes; but it has other important blemishes: stupendous as it is, it is incomplete; it abounds with inaccuracies and indelicate allusions; it wants a true and profound insight into the causes of Roman decline; as a narrative, it is indirect, cumbrous, and frequently obscure;

as a composition, its colours are often false, barbaric, and overlaid, and though sparkling with sudden brilliances, it has no sustained power or splendour. What a different, and, in many respects, what a superior and monumental work of it might De Quincey have made, had he, ten or twenty years ago, set himself resolutely to the task! In the year 1839, after long absence from the arena of "Blackwood's Magazine," he leaped down upon it again, as with a thunder-tramp. He is the author of that series of scholarly articles which appeared, since then, on "Milton," the "Philosophy of Roman History," "Dinner, Real and Reputed," the "Essenes," "Style," the "Opium Question," "Ricardo Made Easy," &c. And a marvellous series it is, when you take it in connection with his advanced age and shattered system. We were particularly interested by his paper on the "Essenes." It is in the style of the best of Horsley's sermons. He begins, as that prelate was wont, by the statement of what seems a hopeless and dangerous error; but, ere he be done, he has surrounded it with such plausible analogies, he has darted upon it such a glare of learning, he has so fenced it in with bristling dilemmas, he has so cut the difficulties and strangled the objections started against it, that you lay down the paper, believing, or, at least, wishing to believe, that the Essenes and the Christians were identical.

Besides this, Mr De Quincey has written a long series of sketches in "Tait's Magazine" of contemporary characters, of various merit, but some of which (we refer particularly to those of Coleridge, Southey, Charles Lamb, Hannah More, and Charles Lloyd) are quite worthy of his versatile and vigorous pen.

De Quincey! farewell! Many pleasing hours have we spent in the perusal of thy eloquent page, and not a few in listening to thy piercing words. Not a few tears have we given to thy early sorrows. With no little emotion have we followed the current of thy romantic narrative, now gliding by the "Towers of Julius," reflecting the abhorred agonies of hunger and abandonment, and mirroring the countenance of the lost Anne; now darkened by the shadow of the Welsh mountains, and again by the deeper darkness of thine own diseased and dream-haunted spirit; and now murmuring calmer measures in rocky Cumberland, with the high front of Wordsworth, and the dim eye of Coleridge, like a nebulous star, looking down upon the still water. May it close its race in splendour. May thine be the golden evening which often succeeds a troubled and tempestuous day. Again, fare-thee-well!

SECOND SITTING.

When a portion of the present work first appeared, a copy of it was sent to an eminent lay-divine; the first sentence of whose reply was, "you have sent me a *list of shipwrecks*." It was but too true, for that "Gallery" contains the name of a Godwin, shipwrecked on a false system —and a Shelley, shipwrecked on an extravagant version of that false system—and a Hazlitt, shipwrecked on no system at all — and a Hall, driven upon the rugged reef of madness—and a Foster, cast high and dry upon the dark shore of Misanthropy—and an Edward Irving, inflated into sublime idiocy by the breath of popular favour, and, in the subsidence of that breath, left to roll at the mercy of the waves, a mere log—and, lastly, a Coleridge and a De Quincey, stranded on the same poppy-covered coast, the land of the "Lotos-eaters," where it is never morning, nor midnight, nor full day, but always afternoon.

Wrecks all these are, but all splendid and instructive withal. And we propose now repairing a second time to the shore, where the last great argosy, Thomas De Quincey, lies half-bedded in mud, to pick up whatever of noble and rare, of pure and permanent, we can find floating around. We would speak of De Quincey's history, of his faults, of his genius, of his works, and of his future place in the history of literature. And when we reflect on what

a *mare magnum* we are about to show to many of our readers, we feel for the moment as if it were new to us also, as if *we* stood,

"Like stout Cortes, when with eagle eyes
He stared at the Pacific,
——— and all his men
Gather'd round him with a wild surmise,
Silent, upon a peak of Darien."

We cannot construct a regular biography of this remarkable man; neither the time for this has come, nor have the materials been, as yet, placed within reach of us, or of any one else. But we may sketch the outlines of what we know—which is, indeed, but little.

Thomas De Quincey is the son of a Liverpool merchant. He is one of several children, the premature loss of one of whom he has, in his "Suspiria de Profundis" (published in "Blackwood") most plaintively and eloquently deplored. His father seems to have died early. Guardians were appointed over him, with whom he contrived to quarrel, and from whose wing (while studying at Oxford) he fled to London. There he underwent a series of surprising adventures and severe sufferings, which he has recounted in the first part of his "Opium Confessions." On one occasion, while on the point of death by starvation, his life was saved by the intervention of a poor street-stroller, of whom he afterwards lost sight, but whom, in the strong gratitude of his heart, he would "pursue into the central darkness of a London brothel, or into the deeper darkness of the grave." Part of the same dark period of his life was spent in Wales, where he subsisted now on the hospitality of the country people, and now, poor fellow, on hips and haws. He was at last found out by some of his friends, and remanded to Oxford. Shortly after he formed a friendship with Christopher North, which has continued unimpaired to this hour. Both—besides the band of kindred genius—had that of profound admiration, then a rare feeling, for the poetry of Wordsworth. In the course of this part of his life, he visited Ireland, and was introduced soon afterwards to OPIUM—fatal friend, treacherous ally—root of that tree called Wormwood, which has overshadowed all his after life. A blank here occurs in his history. We find him next in a small white cottage in Cumberland—married—studying Kant, drinking laudanum, and dreaming the most wild and wondrous dreams which ever crossed the brain of mortal. These dreams he recorded in the "London Magazine," then a powerful periodical, conducted by John Scott, and supported by such men as Hazlitt, Lamb, and Allan Cunningham. The "Confessions," when published separately, ran like wild-fire, although, from their anonymous form, they added nothing at the time to the author's fame. Not long after their publication, Mr De Quincey came down to Scotland, where he has continued to reside, wandering from place to place, contributing to periodicals of all sorts and sizes—to "Blackwood," "Tait," "North British Review," "Hogg's Instructor," as well as writing for the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and publishing one or two independent works, such as "Klosterheim," a tale, and the "Logic of Political Economy." His wife has been long dead. Three of his daughters, amiable and excellent persons, live in the sweet village of Lasswade, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh—and there he is, we believe, at present himself.

From this very imperfect sketch of De Quincey's history, there rush into our minds some rather painful reflections. It is painful to see a

"Giant mind broken by sorrows unspoken,
And woes."

It is painful to see a glorious being transfigured into a rolling thing before the whirlwind. It is painful to be compelled to inscribe upon such a shield the word "Desdichado." It is painful to remember how much misery must have passed through that heart, and how many sweat-drops of agony must have stood, in desolate state, upon that brow. And it is most painful of all to feel that guilt as well as misery has been here, and that the sowing of the wind preceded the reaping of the whirlwind.

Such reflections were mere sentimentalism, unless attended by such corollaries as these:—First, self-control ought to be, more than at present, a part of education, sedulously and sternly taught—for is it not the geometry of life? Secondly, society should feel more that she is responsible for the wayward children of genius, and ought to seek more than she does to soothe their sorrows, to relieve their wants, to reclaim their wanderings, and to search, as with lighted candles, into the causes of their misery. Had the public, twenty years ago, feeling Mr De Quincey to be one of the master spirits of the age, and therefore, potentially, one of its greatest benefactors, inquired deliberately into his case, sought him out, put him beyond the reach of want, encouraged thus his heart and strengthened his hand, rescued him from the mean miseries into which he was plunged, smiled approvingly upon the struggles he was making to conquer an evil habit—in one word, *recognised* him, what a different man had he been now, and over what magnificent wholes had we been rejoicing, in the shape of his works, instead of deploring powers and acquirements thrown away in rearing Towers of Babel, tantalising in proportion to the magnitude of their design and the beauty of their execution! Neglected and left alone as a corpse in the shroud of his own genius, a fugitive, though not a vagabond, compelled day after day to fight absolute starvation at the point of his pen, the marvel is, that he has written so much which the world may not willingly let die. *But* it is the world's fault that the writings it now recognises, and may henceforth preserve on a high shelf, are rather the sublime ravings, than the calm, profound cogitations of De Quincey. The theory of capital punishments is much more subtle and widely ramified than we might at first suppose. On what else are many of our summary critical and moral judgments founded? Men find a man guilty of a crime—they vote him for that one act a purely pernicious member of society, and they turn him off. So a Byron quarrels with his wife—a Coleridge loses his balance, and begins to reel and totter like Etna in an earthquake—a Burns, made an exciseman, gradually descends towards the level of his trade—or a De Quincey takes to living on laudanum, and the public, instead of seeking to reform and re-edify each brilliant begun ruin, shouts out, "Raze, raze it to its foundation!" Because the sun is eclipsed, they would howl him away! Because one blot has lighted on an imperishable page, they would burn it up! Let us hope, that, as our age is fast becoming ashamed of those infernal sacrifices called executions, so it shall also soon forbear to make its most gifted sons pass through the fire to Moloch, till it has tested their *thorough* and *ineradicable* vileness.

Mr De Quincey's faults we have spoken of in the plural—we ought, perhaps, rather to have used the singular number. In the one word excitement, assuming the special form of opium—the "insane root"—lies the *gravamen* of his guilt, as also of Coleridge's. Now, we are far from wishing to underrate the evil of this craving. But we ought to estimate Mr De Quincey's criminality with precision and justice; and, while granting that he used opium to excess—an excess seldom paralleled—we must take his own explanation of the circumstances which led him to begin its use, and of the effects it produced on him. He did not begin it to multiply or intensify his pleasures, still less to lash himself with its fiery thongs into a counterfeit inspiration, but to alleviate bodily pain. It became, gradually and reluctantly, a necessity of his life. Like the serpents around Laocoon, it confirmed its grasp, notwithstanding the wild tossings of his arms, the spasmodic resistance of every muscle, the loud shouts of protesting agony; and, when conquered, he lay, like the overpowered Hatteraick in the cave, sullen, still in despair, breathing hard, but perfectly powerless. Its effects on him, too, were of a peculiar kind. They were not brutifying or blackguardising. He was never intoxicated with the drug in his life; nay, he denies its power to intoxicate. Nor did it at all weaken his intellectual faculties, any more than it strengthened them. We have

heard poor creatures consoling themselves for their inferiority by saying, "Coleridge would not have written so well but for opium." "No thanks to De Quincey for his subtlety—he owes it to opium." Let such persons swallow the drug, and try to write the "Suspiria," or the "Aids to Reflection."

Coleridge and De Quincey were great in spite of their habits. Nay, we believe that on truly great intellects stimulus produces little inspiration at all. Can opium think? can beer imagine? It is De Quincey in opium—not opium in De Quincey—that ponders and that writes. The stimulus is only the *occasional cause* which brings the internal power into play; it may sometimes dwarf the giant, but it can never really elevate the dwarf.

The evil influences of opium on De Quincey were of a different, but a very pernicious sort. They weakened his will; they made him a colossal slave to a tiny tyrant; they shut him up (like the Genie in the "Arabian Tales") in a phial filled with dusky fire; they spread a torpor over the energies of his body; they closed up, or poisoned, the natural sources of enjoyment: the air, the light, the sunshine, the breeze, the influences of spring, lost all charm and power over him. Instead of these, snow was welcomed with an unnatural joy, storm embraced as a brother, and the stern scenery of night arose like a desolate temple round his ruined spirit. If his heart was not utterly hardened, it was owing to its peculiar breadth and warmth. At last his studies were interrupted, his peace broken, his health impaired, and then came the noon of his night; a Form of gigantic gloom, swaying an "ebon sceptre," stood over him in triumph, and it seemed as if nothing less than a miraculous intervention could rescue the victim from his power.

But the victim was not an ordinary one. Feeling that hell had come, and that death was at hand, he determined, by a mighty effort, to arise from his degradation. For a season his struggles were great and impotent, as those of the giants cast down by Jove under Etna. The mountain shook, the burden tottered, but the light did not at first appear. Nor has he ever, we suspect, completely emancipated himself from his bondage; but he has struggled manfully against it, and has cast off such a large portion of the burden, that it were injustice not to say of him that he is now FREE.

It were ungracious to have dwelt, even so long, upon the errors of De Quincey, were it not that, first, his own frankness of disclosure frees us from all delicacy; and that, secondly, the errors of such a man, like the cloud of the pillar, have two sides—his darkness may become our light, his sin our salvation.

We pass to the subject of his genius. That is certainly one of the most singular—in its power, variety, culture, and eccentricity—our age has witnessed. His intellect is at once solid and subtle, reminding you of veined and figured marble, so beautiful and evasive in aspect, that you must touch ere you are certain of its firmness. The motion of his mind is like that of dancing, but it is the dance of a Polyphemus, with his heavy steps, thundering down the music to which he moves. Hence his humour often seems forced in motion, while always fine in spirit. The contrast between the slow march of his sentences, the frequent gravity of his spirit, the recondite masses of his lore, the logical severity of his diction, and his determination, at times, to be desperately witty, produces a ludicrous effect, but somewhat different from what he had intended. It is "Laughter" lame, and only able to hold *one* of his sides, so that you laugh at, as well as with, him. But few, we think, would have been hypercritical in judging of Columbus' first attitudes as he stepped down upon his new world. And thus, let a great intellectual explorer be permitted to occupy his own region, in whatever way, and with whatever ceremonies, may seem best to himself.

Genius and logical perception are De Quincey's principal powers. Perhaps his deepest thoughts have never been disclosed. Like Burke, he has not "hung his heart upon his sleeve, for daws to peck at." He has profound reticence as well as power, and he has modesty as

well as reticence. On subjects with which he is acquainted—such as logic, literature, or political economy—no man can speak with more positive and perfect assurance. But on all topics where the conscience —the innermost moral nature—must be the umpire, the "English Opium-Eater" is silent.

Indeed, De Quincey's style is one of the most wondrous of his gifts. As Professor Wilson once said to us about him, "the *best* word always comes up." It comes up easily, as a bubble on the wave; and is yet fixed, solid, and permanent as marble. His style is at once warm as genius, and cool as logic. Frost and fire fulfil the paradox of "embracing each other." His faculties never disturb or distract each other's movements—they are inseparable, as substance and shadow. His sentences are generally very long, and as full of life and of joints as a serpent. It is told of Coleridge, that no shorthand-writer could do justice to his lectures; because, although he spoke deliberately, yet it was impossible, from the first part of his sentences, to have the slightest notion how they were to end—each clause was a new surprise, and the close often unexpected as a thunderbolt. In this, as in many other respects, De Quincey resembles the "noticeable man with large grey eyes." Each of his periods, begin where it may, accomplishes a cometary sweep ere it closes. To use an expression of his own, applied to Bishop Berkeley, he passes, with the utmost ease and speed, from "tar-water to the Trinity, from a mole-heap to the thrones of the Godhead." His sentences are microcosms —real, though imperfect wholes. It is as if he dreaded that earth would end, and chaos come again, ere each prodigious period were done. This practice, so far from being ashamed of, he often and elaborately defends—contrasting it with the "short-winded and asthmatic" style of writing which abounds in modern times, and particularly among French authors. We humbly think that the truth on this question lies in the middle. If an author is anxious for fulness, let him use long sentences; if he aims at clearness, let them be short. If he is beating about for truth, his sentences will be long; if he deems he has found, and wishes to communicate it to others, they will be short. In long sentences, you see processes; in short, results. Eloquence delights in long sentences; wit, in short. Long sentences impress more at the time; short sentences, if nervous, cling more to the memory. From long sentences you must, in general, deduct a considerable quantum of verbiage; short have often a meagre and skeleton air. The reading of long sentences is more painful at first, less so afterwards; a volume composed entirely of short sentences becomes soon wearisome. The mind which employs long sentences has often a broad, but dim vision; that which delights in short, sees a great number of small points clearly, but seldom a rounded whole. De Quincey is a good specimen of the first class; the late Dr Hamilton, of Leeds, was the most egregious instance of the second. With all his learning, and talent, and fancy, the writings of that distinguished divine are rendered exceedingly tedious by the broken and gasping character of their style—reading which has been compared to walking on stepping-stones, instead of a firm road. Everything is so clear, sharp, and short, that you get irritated and provoked, and cry out for an intricate or lengthy sentence, both as a trial to your wind, and as a relief to your weariness.

The best style of writing, in point of effect, is that which combines both forms of sentence in proper proportions. Just as a well-armed warrior of old, while he held the broadsword in his right hand, had the dagger of mercy suspended by his side, the effective writer, who can at one time wave the flaming brand of eloquence, can at another use the pointed poniard of direct statement, of close logic, or of keen and caustic wit. Thus did Burke, Hall, Horsley, and Foster.

Akin to De Quincey's length of sentence, is his ungovernable habit of digression. You can as soon calculate on the motions of a stream of the aurora, as on those of his mind. From the title of any

one of his papers, you can never infer whether he is to treat the subject announced, or a hundred others—whether the subjects he is to treat are to be cognate, or contradictory, to the projected theme—whether, should he begin the subject, he shall ever finish it—or into how many foot-notes he is to draw away, as if into subterranean pipes, its pith and substance. At every possible angle of his road he contrives to break off, and hence he has never yet reached the end of a day's journey. Unlike Christian in the "Pilgrim," *he* welcomes every temptation to go astray; and, not content with shaking hands with old Worldly Wiseman, he must, before climbing Mount Difficulty, explore both the way of Danger and that of Destruction. It may be inquired, if this arise from the fertility or from the frailty of his genius—from his knowledge of, and dominion over, every province of thought, or from his natural or acquired inability to resist "right-hand or left-hand defections," provided they promise to interest himself, and to amuse his readers. Judging from Coleridge's similar practice, we are forced to conclude that it is in De Quincey, too, a weakness fostered, if not produced, by long habits of self-indulgence.

And yet, notwithstanding such defects (and we might have added to them his use of logical formulæ at times when they appear simply ridiculous, his unnecessary scholasticism and display of learning, the undue self-complacence with which he parades his peculiar views, and explodes his adversary's, however reputed and venerable, and a certain air of exaggeration which swathes all his written speech), what splendid powers this strange being at all times and on all subjects exerts! With what razor-like sharpness does he cut the most difficult distinctions! What learning is his—here compelling wonder, from its variety and minute accuracy; and there, from the philosophical grasp with which he holds it in compressed masses! And, above all, what grand, sombre, Miltonic gleams his imagination casts around him on his way; and in what deep swells of organ-like music do his thoughts often, harmoniously and irrepressibly, move! The three prose-writers of this century, who, as it appears to us, approach most nearly to the giants of the era of Charles I., in spirit of genius and munificence of language, are, Coleridge, in some of his works; Thomas Aird, in parts of his "Religious Characteristics;" and Thomas De Quincey, in his "Confessions," and his "Suspiria de Profundis."

In coming down from an author to his works, we have often a feeling of humiliation and disappointment. It is like comparing the great Ben Nevis with the streamlets which flow from his base, and asking, "Is this all the mighty mountain can give the world?" So, "What has De Quincey done?" is a question we are now sure to hear, and feel rather afraid to answer.

In a number of "Hogg's Instructor," Mr De Quincey, as if anticipating some such objection, argues (referring to Professor Wilson), that it is ridiculous to expect a writer now to write a large separate work, as some had demanded from the professor. He is here, however, guilty of a fallacy, which we wonder he allowed to escape from his pen; there is a difference between a large and a great work. No one ever wished either De Quincey or John Wilson to write a folio; what men wanted from each of them was, an *artistic* whole, large or comparatively small, fully reflecting the image of his mind, and bearing the relation to his other works which the "Paradise Lost" does to Milton's "Lycidas," "Arcades," and "Hymn on the Nativity." And this, precisely, is what neither of those illustrious men has effected.

De Quincey's works, if collected, would certainly possess sufficient bulk; they lie scattered in prodigal profusion through the thousand-and-one volumes of our periodical literature; and we are certain that a selection of their better portions would fill ten admirable octavos. Mr De Quincey himself was lately urged to collect them. His reply was, "Sir, the thing is absolutely, insuperably, and for ever impossible. Not the archangel Gabriel, nor his multipotent adversary, durst attempt

any such thing!" We suspect, at least, that death must seal the lips of the "old man eloquent," ere such a selection shall be made. And yet, in those unsounded abysses, what treasures might be found —of criticism, of logic, of wit, of metaphysical acumen, of research, of burning eloquence, and essential poetry! We should meet there with admirable specimens of translation from Jean Paul Richter and Lessing; with a criticism on the former, quite equal to that more famous one of Carlyle's; with historical chapters, such as those in "Blackwood" on the Cæsars, worthy of Gibbon; with searching criticisms, such as one on the Knocking in "Macbeth," and two series on Landor and Sclosser; with the elephantine humour of his lectures on "Murder, considered as one of the fine arts;" and with the deep theological insight of his papers on Christianity, considered as a means of social progress, and on the Essenes. In fact, De Quincey's knowledge of theology is equal to that of two bishops —in metaphysics, he could puzzle any German professor—and in Greek, excite to jealousy the shades of Porson and Parr. There is another department in which he stands first, second, and third—we mean the serious hoax. Do our readers remember the German romance of "Walladmor," passed off at the Leipsic fair as one of Sir Walter Scott's, and afterwards translated into English? The translation —which was, in fact, a new work—was executed by De Quincey, who, finding the original dull, thought proper to re-write it; and thus to charge trick upon trick. Or have they ever read that chapter (alluded to above) in "Blackwood" for July, 1837, on the "Retreat of a Tartar Tribe?" a chapter certainly containing the most powerful historical painting we ever read, and recording a section of adventurous and romantic story not equalled, he says, "since the retreat of the fallen angels." This chapter, we have good reason for knowing, originated principally in his own inventive brain. Add to all this, the fiery eloquence of his "Confessions"—the laboured speculation of his "Political Economy"—the curiously-perverted ingenuity of his "Klosterheim"—and the solemn, sustained, linked, and lyrical raptures of his "Suspiria;"* and we have answered the question, What has he done? But another question is less easy to answer, What can he, or should he, or shall he, yet do? And here we venture to express a long-cherished opinion. Pure history, or that species of biography which merges into history, is his *forte*, and ought to have been his selected province. He never could have written a first-rate fiction or poem, or elaborated a complete or original system of philosophy, although both his imagination and his intellect are of a very high order. But he has every quality of the great historian, except compression: he has learning, insight, the power of reproducing the past, fancy to colour and wit to enliven his writing, and a style which, while it is unwieldy upon small subjects, rises to meet all great occasions, like a senator to salute a king. The only danger is, that, if he were writing the history of the Crusades or Cæsars, for instance, his work would expand to the dimensions of the "Universal History."

A great history we do not now expect from De Quincey; but he might produce some, as yet, unwritten life, such as the life of Dante or of Milton. Such a work would at once concentrate his purpose, task his powers, and perpetuate his name.

As it is, his place in the future gallery of ages is somewhat uncertain. For all he has hitherto done, or for all the impression he has made upon the world, his course may be marked as that of a brilliant, but timid, meteor, shooting athwart the midnight, watched by but few eyes, but accompanied by the keenest interest and admiration of those who did watch it. Passages of his writings may be preserved in collections; and, among natural curiosities in the museum of man, his memory must assuredly be included as the greatest consumer of laudanum and

* The third number of the "Suspiria," which appeared in "Blackwood" for June, 1845, is the most profound, eloquent, and heartrending prose-poem in the language. It is a sigh which only the Second Advent can answer.

learning—as possessing the most potent of brains and the weakest of wills of almost all men who ever lived.

We have other two remarks to offer ere we close. Our first is, that, with all his errors, De Quincey has never ceased to believe in Christianity. In an age when most men of letters have gone over to the sceptical side, and too often treat with insolent scorn, as sciolistic and shallow, those who still cling to the Gospel, it is refreshing to find one who stands confessedly at the head of them all, in point of talent and learning, so intimately acquainted with the tenets, so profoundly impressed by the evidences, and so ready to do battle for the cause, of the blessed faith of Jesus. From those awful depths of sorrow in which he was long plunged, he never ceased to look up to the countenance and the cross of the Saviour; and now, recovered from his evils, and sins, and degradations, we seem to see him sitting, "clothed and in his right mind, at the feet of Jesus." Would to God that others of his class were to go, and to sit down beside him!

Note.—Since this paper was written, Mr Hogg *has* begun to issue a beautiful series of "Selections" from the works of Thomas De Quincey, which fully bear out all we have said in his praise.

PROFESSOR NICHOL.

THIS is the age of public lecturing, and we might spend a long time in discussing its *pros* and *cons*, its advantages and its evils. The open and legitimate objects which popular lecturing proposes to itself are chiefly the three following: instruction, excitement, and communication between the higher minds of the age and those of a lower grade. Now, in reference to its utility as an organ of instruction, much may be said on both sides. In public lecturing, truth is painted to the eye; it is enforced and illustrated by voice, gesture, and action; it stands in the person of the orator as in an illumined window. The information thus given, attended by a personal interest, and accompanied by a peculiar emphasis, is more profoundly impressed upon the memory; and many, by the fairy aspect of truth which is presented, are induced to love and learn, who otherwise would have remained indifferent and distant. On the other hand, the quantity of knowledge communicated by lecturing is seldom large; and, as to its quality, lecturers are under strong temptations to dilute it down to the capacities of their audience; and, instead of conducting them from first principles to details, to give them particular facts, and tell them to travel back themselves to leading principles—an advice which they seldom, if ever, follow. Too often the hearers, however strongly urged to the contrary by their instructors, forget to pursue profounder researches, to seek after higher sources; and the close of the six or seven lectures is the close of their studies, and furnishes the complement of their knowledge. Often, too, the class who have least access to books have also least access to lectures, or, even when privileged to attend them, find their *special* wants but indifferently supplied.

In the excitement produced by good public lecturing, its advocates find a more plausible argument in its favour. It is an amusement so happy and so innocent; it withdraws so many from the theatre, the card-table, and the tavern; it gives such a stimulus to nascent intellects; it creates around the lecturer such circles and semicircles of shining faces; it rouses in so many breasts the spark of literary and scientific genius; it commences the manufacture of so many incipient Miltons, no longer mute and inglorious; and of whole generations of young Arkwrights, worthy of their illustrious progenitor. Nay, we would go a little farther still; we would "better the instruction." Its excitement and pleasure do not stop

here. The lecture-room promotes a great many matches; it brings young ladies and gentlemen into close and intimate propinquity; it excites active and animated flirtations; it forms, besides, a pleasant interchange to one class with the card-table—to another, an agreeable lounge on the road to the afterpiece—and to a third, a safe and decent half-way house to a quiet social talk in a quiet alehouse. It is also a nursery for the numerous sprigs of criticism which abound—faithfully figured by the immortal "Punch," in those specimens of the rising generation who deem that, as "for that 'ere Shakspere, he has been vastly overrated." And last, not least, it permits many a comfortable nap to the hard-wrought doctor, or schoolmaster, or artisan—to whom it matters not whether the lecturer be in the moon or in the clouds, as they are only, like their instructor, absent and lost.

Joking, however, apart, popular lecturing is undoubtedly a source both of much entertainment and excitement, though we are not sure but that that entertainment is more valued by the luxurious as a variety in their pleasures, than by the middle and lower classes as a necessity in their intellectual life; and although we *are* sure that an undue proportion of that excitement springs from the glare of lights, the presence of ladies, the mere "heat, and stare, and pressure," of which Chalmers complained; and that comparatively little of it can be traced to the art, less to the genius, and least of all to the subject, of the discourser.

As a means of communication between men of science and literature and the age, it is, we are afraid, what Mr Horne would call a "false medium." You have in it the teacher of truth, shorn, dressed, perhaps scented, perhaps playing miserable monkey-tricks to divert the audience. Or, if he do preserve his integrity, and speak to the souls instead of the eyes and ears of his audience, it is at his proper peril; wild yawnings, slumbers both loud and deep, not to speak of the more polite hints conveyed in the music of slapping doors and rasping floors, are the reward of his fidelity. We are aware, indeed, that a few have been able to overcome such obstacles, and, in spite of stern adherence to a high object, to gain general acceptance. But these are the exceptions. Their success, besides, has greatly resulted from other causes than the truth they uttered. Certain graces of manner —certain striking points in delivery—a certain melody to which their thoughts were set—created at the first an interest which gradually, as the enthusiasm of the speaker increased, swelled into a brute wonder, which made you fancy the words "Orpheus no fable" written in a transparency over the speaker's head. But clear steady perceptions of truth, true and satisfying pleasure, and any permanent or transforming change, were not given. The audience were lifted up for a season, as if in a whirlwind, by the sheer power of eloquence; they were not really elevated one distinct step — they came down precisely the same creatures, and to the same point, as before, and the thing would be remembered by them afterwards as a dream.

Certain minds, however, and those of a high order, there are which find in the lecture a far freer and more useful passage to the public ear and intellect, and succeed in giving not only a vague emotion of delight, but some solid knowledge, and some lasting result. Such a mind is that of Professor Nichol; and we propose now to analyse its constituent qualities, as well as the special causes of his great success as a lecturer.

The first time we heard of Professor Nichol was on the publication of his "Views of the Architecture of the Heavens," and the first thing that struck us about the production was the felicity of its title. The words "Architecture of the Heavens" suggested, first, the thought that the heavens were the building of a distinct divine architect; secondly, that the building was still in progress; and, thirdly, that from even this low and distant platform we are permitted glimpses of its gradual growth toward perfection. The essence, in fact, of the nebular hypothesis was contained in the title; and, although that hypothesis is now commonly

thought exploded, it is only so far as the visible evidence is concerned—as a probable and beautiful explanation of phenomena, the origin of which is lost in the darkness of immeasurable antiquity, it retains its value. But how suggestive to us at the time was the expression, "Architecture of the Heavens!" Formerly we deemed that, when man awaked into existence, the building, indeed, was there in all its magnitude, but that the scaffolding was down—all trace and vestige of the operation elaborately removed—and that the almighty Architect had withdrawn and hid himself. But now we had come upon the warm footprints of Omnipotence—the Power was only a few steps in advance; nay, thrilling thought! we had only to lift our telescopes to behold him actually at work up there in the midnight sky. The telescope enabled us to stand behind the processes of the Eternal—it was a wing by which we overtook the great retreat of the Deity, if indeed a retreat it was, and not rather a perpetual progress — a triumphal march onwards into the infinite dark. It brought us ever new, electric, telegraphic tidings of Him whose goings forth were of *old*—from everlasting—and which were *new* to everlasting as well. Such were the dim, yet high suggestions of the nebular hypothesis. If we relinquished them recently with a sigh, we now sigh no more; for now we have been taught, in a manner most impressive, the immense *age* of the universe, whose orbs seem hoary in their splendour, and have thus found a new measure for computing our knowledge, or rather for more accurately estimating our ignorance, of the days of the years of the right hand of him that is the Most High. How long, we now exclaim, it must be since the Great Artist put his finishing touch to that serene gallery of paintings we call the stars, and yet how perfect and how godlike their execution—since their lustre, their beauty, and their holy calm are this night as fresh and unfaded as at the beginning! And how solemn the thought, if these works, in the hiding of their Creator, be so magnificent, how great must himself be, and how great must he have been, especially as he travailed in birth with such an offspring, amid the jubilant shouts of all awakening intelligence!

It is very common to skip the preface in order to get at the book. In this case, we skipped the book to get at the pictures. We read, nay, devoured, the plates —the poems shall we call them—ere we read a word of the letterpress. And most marvellous to us was their revelation of those starry sprinklings, relieved against the dark background—those wild, capricious shapes, which reminded you of rearing steeds under the control of perfect riders—seeming at once to spurn and to be subject to immutable laws—why, we seemed standing on a Pisgah, commanding the prospect of immensity itself. But still more striking to overlook, as we then imagined, the creative forge of God, and to see his work in every stage of its progress — the six demiurgic days presented to us contemporaneously and at once. What a triumph, too, to mind over matter, and to a poor sun-illumined worm over his haughty torch—to be able, *with a pin-point*, to indicate, and, if necessary, to hide, his place in the firmament! It was, indeed, an hour much deserving of memory. The folding-doors of the universe seemed to open upon us in musical thunder; and, if we could not as yet enter, yet we could wish, like Mirza, for the wings of a great eagle to fly away within them. It was one of those apocalyptic moments that occur, or that can occur, so seldom in life, for it is not every day that we can see, for the first time, in the expanded page of immensity, the charter of our soul's freedom, and feel ourselves "enlarged" to the extent of the length and breadth, the depth and the height, of the creation.

Returning from a reverie, in which we saw our sun and his thousand neighbour stars quenched like a taper in the blaze of that higher noon, we found ourselves on earth again, and remembered that we had yet to read Dr Nichol's book. And it is the highest compliment we can pay it, to say that it did not dissipate or detract from the impressions which the clo-

quent pictures had produced, and that it gave them a yet clearer and more definite form. It bridged in the foaming torrent of our enthusiasm. It translated (as Virgil does Homer) the stern and literal grandeurs of night into a mild and less dazzling version. We liked, in the first place, its form. It consisted of letters, and of letters to a lady. This held out a prospect of ease, familiarity, clearness, and grace. Most expounders, hitherto, of astronomical truth had been either too stilted in their style, or too scientific in their substance. But here was a graceful conversation, such as an accomplished philosopher might carry on with an intelligent female, under the twilight canopy, or in the window recess, as the moon was rising. It in no way transcended female comprehension, or, if it did, it was only to slide into one of those beautiful, bewitching mists which the imagination of women so much loves. There were, too, a warmth and a heartiness about the style and manner, which distinguished the book favourably from the majority of scientific treatises. These, generally, are cold and dry. Trusting, it would seem, to the intrinsic grandeur of the subject, they convey their impressions of it in a didactic and feeble style, and catalogue stars as indifferently as they would the fungi of the forest. Nichol, on the contrary, seems to point to them, not with a cold rod, but with a waving torch. He never "doubts that the stars are fire"—no immeasurable icebergs they, floating in frozen air, but glowing, burning, almost living orbs; and his words glow, burn, and nearly start from the page in unison. We will not deny that this heat and enthusiasm sometimes betray him into *splendida vitia*—into rhetorical exaggerations—into passages which sound hollow, whether they are so or not—and worse, into dim and vague obscurities, copied too closely from his own nebulæ, where you have misty glimmer, instead of clear, solid land; but his faults are of a kind which it is far more easy to avoid than to reach, which no sordid or commonplace mind, however accomplished, durst commit; and the spirit which animates his most peculiar combinations of sound, and peeps through his swelling intricacies of sentence, is always beautiful and sincere. Beyond most writers, too, on this theme, he has the power of giving, even to the uninitiated, a clear and memorable idea of his subject—the truths of astronomy he paints upon the eye and soul of the reader. And this he is enabled to do—first, because he has a clear vision himself, which his enthusiasm is seldom permitted to dull or to distort; and, secondly, because he seeks—labours—is not satisfied till he has transferred this entire to the minds of his readers and of his auditors. Thus far of the mere manner of his writing. In considering its spirit, we shall find metal more attractive. This is distinguished by its sincere enthusiasm, its joyous hope, and by its religious reverence.

What field for enthusiasm can be named in comparison with the innumerous and ever-burning stars—the first objects which attract the eyes of children, who send up their sweetest smiles, and uplift their tiny hands to pluck them down as playthings—the beloved of solitary shepherds, who, lying on the hillside, try to count them in their multitudes, call them by names of their own, love those "watchers and holy ones" as if they were companions and friends, and sometimes exclaim, with the great shepherd-king of Israel, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained, what is man!"—the beloved of the mariner, who, pacing his midnight deck, turns often aloft his eye to them, shining on him through the shrouds, or

> "Mirror'd in the ocean vast,
> A thousand fathoms down"—

the loved of the wakeful, especially of those who are awake through sorrow, who, as they see them trembling through the lattice, feel, or fancy, that they are sympathising with their agonies, and would, if they could, send down a message from their far thrones that might wipe away their tears—the loved of the astronomer, who, a friendly spy, watches their

every motion, and through the tube of his telescope distils into himself the essence of their laws—the loved of the poet's soul, who snatches many a live-coal of inspiration from their flaming altars—the loved of the Christian, who sees in them the reflection of his Father's glory, the milestones on the path of his Redeemer's departure, and of his return—the loved of all who have eyes to see, understandings to comprehend, and souls to feel their grandeur so unspeakable, their silence so profound, their separation from each other, and from us, so entire, their multitude so vast, their lustre so brilliant, their forms so singular, their order so regular, their motions so dignified, so rapid, and so calm. "If," says Emerson, "the stars were to appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had thus been shown. But night after night come out these preachers of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile."

It is singular, that, while the theory of the stars has been perpetually changing, the conception of their sublime character has under every theory remained nearly the same. While they are believed to be, as in the darker ages, absolutely divine, incorruptible, and perfect in their essence, they were not regarded with more enthusiasm, alluded to with more frequency, or lauded with more eloquence, than now, when we know that imperfection and inequality, decay and destruction, have found their way thither, as well as here; and Dante, amid his innumerable descriptions of the heavenly bodies (and no poet has so many), has said nothing finer in their praise than we find in some of the bursts of Bailey. If science has, with rude hand, torn off from the stars that false lustre of supernaturalism which they bore so long, it has immeasurably multiplied their numbers, unlocked their secrets, at once brought them nearer and thrown them farther off, and supplied the glitter of superstition by the severe light of law. If they seem no longer the thrones of angels, they are at least porch-lamps in the temple of Almighty God. If not now regarded as a part of the highest heaven, they at least light the way that leadeth to honour, glory, and immortality. From sparks they have broadened into suns; from thousands they have multiplied into millions. It is ever thus with the progress of genuine truth. Remorselessly, as it rushes on, it scatters a thousand beautiful dreams, slumbering like morning dew-drops among the branches of the wood, but from the path of its progress there rises, more slowly, a stern, but true and lasting glory, before which, in due time, the former "shall no more be remembered, neither come into mind."

A collection of all the descriptions of the stars, in the poetry and prose of every age, would constitute itself a galaxy. It would include Homer's wondrous one-lined allusions to them—so rapid and so strong, as they shone over Ida, or kept still watch above the solitary Ulysses in his sea-wanderings—the crown they wove over the bare head of the sleepless Prometheus—the glances of power and sympathy which they shed in, through rents in the night of the Grecian tragedies—the ornate and laboured pictures of Virgil and Lucretius—the thick imagery they supply to the Scripture bards—their perpetual intermingling with the "Divina Comedia," darting down through crevices in the descending circles of damnation, circling the mount of purgatory, and paving the way to the vision of essential Deity—Shakspere's less frequent but equally beautiful touches—Milton's plaintive, yet serene references to their set glories—Young's bursts of wonder, almost of craving desire, for those nearer neighbours to the eternal throne, which appeared to him to see so far and to know so much—Byron's wild and angry lashing at them, like a sea seeking to rise and reach and quench them, on a thousand shipwrecks—Wordsworth's love to them, *for* loving and resting on his favourite mountains—Bailey's hymnings of devotion—Chalmers's long-linked swells of pious enthusiasm—and last, not least, our author's raptures, more measured, more artistic, but equally sincere.

There occurs a passage in one of Byron's letters, where he describes himself, after a debauch, looking out at the night, when he exclaims, "What nothings we are before these stars!" and adds, that he *never sufficiently felt their greatness*, till he looked at them through Herschel's telescope, and *saw that they were worlds*. We rather wonder at this, for we have always thought that, to a highly imaginative mind, it mattered little whether it looked to the stars through the eye or the telescope. Who does not see and feel that they are worlds, if he has a heart and an imagination, as well as an eye? Who cares for the size of algebraic symbols? A star, at largest, is but a symbol, and the smaller it seems, the more scope it leaves for imagination. The telescope tends rather to crush and overwhelm than to stimulate — to fill than to fire — some souls. It necessarily, too, deprives the seeing of the stars, so far as they are regarded individually, of many of its finest accessories. The mountain which the star seems to touch — the tree through which it trembles — the soft evening air on which it seems silently to feed — the quick contrasts between it and its neighbouring orbs — its part as one of a constellated family — such poetical aspects of it are all lost, and the glare of illumination falls upon one unit, insulated at once from earth and from the other parts of heaven. It is as though we should apply a magnifying-glass to a single face in a group of painted figures, thereby enlarging one object at the expense of the others, which are not diminished, but blotted out. While, of course, acknowledging the mighty powers and uses of the telescope, and confessing that from no *dream* did we ever more reluctantly awake than from one which lately transported us to Parsonstown, and showed us the nebula in Orion just dropping to pieces, like a bright dissolving cloud, yet we venture to assert that many derive as much pleasure and excitement from the crescent moon, still, as in Shakspere's time, "a silver bow new bent in heaven" — from round, shivering Venus in the green west — from the star of Jove suspended high overhead, like the apparent king of the sky — and from those glorious jewels, hanging like two pendants of equal weight and brilliance, from the ear of night, Orion and the Great Bear, as they could from any revelation of the telescope. This very night we saw what probably impressed our imagination as much as a glimpse of the Rossian glories would have done. The night has been dark and drifting till a few minutes ago. We went out to the door of our dwelling, looking for nothing but darkness, when suddenly, as if flashing out through and from the gloom, and meeting us like a gigantic ghost at our very threshold, we were aware of the presence of *Orion*, and involuntarily shuddered at the sight.

All astronomers of high name have been led at first to their science by the workings of an enthusiasm as strong as passion and as high as poetry. We cannot doubt that Newton was from his boyhood fascinated by the beauty of the heavenly bodies, and that his wistful boyish glances at their serene splendour and mystic dance formed the germs of his future discoveries. To some *Woolsthorpe* reverie of twilight, we may trace the discoveries of his matured manhood. Surely a loftier principle was stirring in him than that which renders the juvenile mechanician uneasy till he has analysed the construction of a toy. It was not, in the first instance, the mathematical puzzles connected with them that attracted him to those remote regions; but it was their remoteness, magnitude, and mystery which roused him to grapple with their secrets. Ordinary children love to see, and would like to join, the march of soldiers, as they step stately by. The boy Newton burned to accompany, as an intelligent witness and companion, the steps of planets and suns. This enthusiasm never altogether subsided, as many well-known anecdotes prove. But too soon it ceased to express itself otherwise than by silent study and wonder, it retired deep into the centre of his being, and men, astonished at the lacklustre look with which the eye of the sage was contemplating the stars, knew not that his spirit was the while gazing

at them as with the insatiate glance of an eagle. Thus frequently has it been with astronomers. Their ardour, diving beyond human sight or sympathy, has failed to attract the minds of others, and, by coating itself in the ice of cold formulæ and petrified words, has repelled many a poetical enthusiast, whose imagination was not his only faculty. We look on Professor Nichol as an accomplished mediator between the two classes of mind, or, as we have formerly called him, an Aaron to many an ineloquent Moses of astronomy.

How he has preserved his childlike love for his subject-matter we do not know, but certainly we always feel, when reading him, that we are following the track of suns, burning and beneficent as footsteps of God, and not of "cinders of the element," whirled round in a mere mechanical motion. It is said that he has sacrificed powers of original discovery to popular effect; but what if this popular effect, in which so many are now participating, should be to rouse the slumbering energies of still mightier geniuses, and give us a few Newtons instead of one fully-developed Nichol!

We like next to, and akin to this, in Professor Nichol, his spirit of hope and joy. This we think ought to be, but is not always, the result of starry contemplations. We have all heard of Carlyle's exclamation, "Ah, it's a sad sight," as he looked up to a sparkling January sky. Whether we join with him in this, or with Emerson in expressions of jubilant praise, may depend partly upon our state of feeling. In certain moods, the stars will appear hearths; in others, hells. The moon is bayed at, not by dogs alone. The evening star awakens the gloomy hour of the misanthrope, and shines the signal to the murderer, as well as lights the lover to his assignation with his mistress, and the poet to his meeting with the muse. Still there are many reasons why the heavenly bodies should be a permanent spring of cheering, if pensive, thought. There is, first, their wondrous beauty. Is it nothing to the happiness of man that God has suspended over his head this book of divine pictures, talking to him in their own low but mighty speech, spotting his nights with splendour, and filling his soul with an inspiring influence which no earthly object can communicate? Doubts and difficulties may occupy part of the intervening time, but the general feeling of humanity is, "Thanks, endless and boundless, to Heaven for the stars." Secondly, they give us a sense of liberty which no other external cause can do, and which must enhance the happiness of man. This was one great good of the discovery of America. *It* did not, when found, fulfil the dreams of navigators; it was not a cluster of fortunate isles, filled with happy spirits—the worst passions of man were found amongst the most beautiful scenery; but its discovery shivered the fetters of usage and prejudice, burst the old *mœnia mundi;* and man the one-eyed giant found himself groping and pawing, to say the least, in a wider dungeon, and breathing a freer air. But the modern astronomy has broken down stronger walls, and made man's spirit free of the universe. What though he has good reason to believe that these many mansions of his Father's house are not, as yet, peopled with the perfect and the happy! To him height and depth have unbared many of their secret marvels—new provinces, pointing to innumerable others behind, have expanded in the kingdom of the Infinite—every limit and barrier have fled away, and the surprised prisoner feels his soul at large, unbounded in a boundless universe. Surely the telescope, in infusing into the mind such a sense of freedom, has been a benefactor to the heart of man, who may exclaim to it, in the language of the sword-song, "Joy-giver, I kiss thee." But, thirdly, the stars diffuse happiness through the thoughtful mind, as revealing a whole so vast that all our partial and gloomy views of it are straightway stamped with imperfection and imbecility. How little and idle our most plausible theories look under the weight of that beaming canopy! Imagine the shell-fish, amidst its sludge, dreaming of the constitution of that world of waters which rolls above! So insig-

nificant appears a Locke, a Kant, or a Spinoza, exalted each some five or six feet above his grave, and theorising so dogmatically on the principles of the starry ocean. We seem to see the mighty mother bending down, listening to each tiny but pompous voice, smilingly measuring the size of the sage, and saying, in the irony of the gods, "And is this really thy opinion, my little hero, and hast thou, within that pretty new thimble of thine, actually condensed the sea of truth? *Perge puer.*" Thus the midnight sky teaches us at once the greatness and the littleness of man—his greatness by comparison with his past self—his littleness by comparison with the expanse of the universe, and with his future being; and by both lessons it summons us to joy; because from the one we are obviously advancing upwards, and because from the other our doubts are seen to be as little as our resolution of them; our darkness yet pettier than our light. Why, to one who could from a high point of view overlook the general scheme of things, the darkest and broadest shadow that ever crossed the mind of man—that ever made him dig for death, or leap howling into perdition—may appear no larger than one dim speck upon a mountain of diamond.

We stand up, therefore, with Leigh Hunt and Emerson, *versus* Carlyle and Foster, for the old name—the happy stars; and Professor Nichol will come in and complete the majority. Without specially, or at large, arguing the question, he takes it for granted, and sees human immortality and infinite progress legibly inscribed on the sky. The words "onwards" and "to come" are to him the rung changes of the sphere-music, and fearlessly, and as in dance, he follows them into the hoary deep.

We admire still more Professor Nichol's spirit of reverence. Religion as a human feeling is so natural a deduction from the spectacles of night, that we sometimes fancy, that, did man live *constantly* in a sunless world, and under a starry canopy, he would be a wiser and holier, if a sadder being. One cause, we imagine, why people in the country are often more *serious* than the same class in towns is, that they are brought more frequently, with less interruption, and often alone, into contact with the night sky. "An undevout astronomer," says Young, "is mad." Nor will the case of La Place disprove this poetic adage—if we understand him to mean, by devotion, that general sense of the Infinite in the imagination which passes as worship into the heart, and comes out as praise upon the lips. In this sense, La Place was a worshipper—and that not merely, as Isaac Taylor intimates, of a law which had frozen into a vast icy idol, but of the warm creation as it shone around him. Still, his worship did not reach the measure, or deserve the name, of piety; it was the worship of an effect, not of its living, personal, and father-like cause. Nichol, on the other hand, never loses sight of the universe as an instant, ever-rushing emanation of the Deity. "God," he says, quoting a friend of kindred spirit, "literally creates the universe every moment." He is led by Boscovich's theory of atoms to suppose an infinite Will, producing incessantly all force and motion. And thus the beauty of things seems to him, as it were, an immediate flush upon the cheek of the Maker, and their light a lustre in his eye, and their motion the circulation of his untiring energies; and yet, withal, the works are never lost in the conception of their Creator, nor the Creator pantheistically identified with the works. The mighty picture, and its mightier background and source, are inseparably connected, but are never confused.

Let us not forget, in fine, Dr Nichol's redundant merits—the genial glow of his spirit—the exuberance of his language—his tremulous and prolonged sympathy with every note of his theme—the clear telescopic light he casts on what is dark—the fine chiaro-scuro in which he often bathes what is clear—the choice flowers of poesy which he culls and wreaths around the drier and barer corners of his discourse—and the rich steam of pious feeling which rises irresistibly from each of his closes, as from a censer of incense. Such qualities we find not only in his

first work, but even more finely displayed, we think, in his book on the "Solar System." "We would indite," says Charles Lamb, "something on the solar system. Betty, bring the candles." How the gentle Elia fared in this candle-light excursion, he does not inform us. In the absence of authentic details concerning this expedition, we have willingly accepted Dr Nichol's more scientific guidance. We have stood with him on the shining summits of the Moon, looked around on the glazed desolation, gone down into the dreader than Domdaniel caverns, and, coming up, asked at the huge overhanging Earth and the stripped stony Sun the unanswered question—Is this a chaos or a ruin? We have climbed the tall cliffs of Venus—been motes in Mercury, itself a mote in the near blaze of the Sun—pressed our footprints in the snows of Mars—swam across the star of Jove, so beautiful and large—paused, and wished to pause for ever, under the divine evenings of Saturn, wishing his ring that of eternity—saluted, from Herschel, the Sun, as the "*Star* of Day," far, faint, diminished, discrowned—and from Neptune, as from a promontory, have looked out into the empire of a night like day, while behind us lay a day like night. A winged painter, with bold pinion and bolder pencil, did he lead us from world to world, and his wing seemed to get stronger, and his vision clearer, and his colours more vivid, the dimmer the region, and the farther the flight.

If we have, in speaking at such length of Dr Nichol as a writer, left ourselves less room to descant on his merits as a lecturer, our reason is, in both characters he is substantially the same. His writings are just undelivered lectures—his lectures are just spoken books. There are some in whom speaking develops new powers, and who are more at home behind the desk of the lecture-room than behind that of the study. There are others in whom speaking discovers new deficiencies, and who, from want of practice or diffidence, or contempt for their audience, lecture below their general powers. Professor Nichol belongs to neither of those classes. Both in the study and the lecture-room, he is the same clear expounder, vivid describer, and tempered enthusiast. His manner, without detracting aught from, adds little or nothing to, the impression of his thought or style, of which it is simply the medium. Its principal quality is ease—an ease not materially impaired by a certain hesitation. Hesitation, we need scarcely say, has often a great charm. How fine sometimes it is accompanying the prattle of a beautiful child! And we know some popular divines who have stammered themselves into pulpit celebrity, proving that a fault dexterously managed is worth *two* merits left in a state of nature. Dr Nichol's hesitation is not great, is confined to his extempore speech, and seems rather to spring from an excess than a deficiency of matter or words. Every little while, too, he resorts to his notes, and reads his fine passages with much gusto and effect. We must say, however, that we prefer him when carrying on his conversations—so lively, explicit, and entertaining—with his hearers.

In this combined character of lecturer and popular writer, Dr Nichol has done more than any man living to release science from its mummy confinements, and to make it walk abroad as a free and living thing. And though he should never accomplish much in the walks of positive discovery, nor even build up any solid systematic treatise of scientific exposition, he shall not have laboured in vain, nor spent his strength for naught. He has, in his various works and progresses through the country, scattered the profuse seeds of what shall yet be an abundant harvest of astronomical enlightenment and enthusiasm. We have been amazed and delighted to witness the impression he contrives to make upon even humble minds, by the joint effect of his subject—his gorgeous style—his gigantic diagrams, and the enthusiasm which speaks through his pallid visage and large grey eyes; and how many "ready-made astronomers" he leaves behind him wherever he goes.

At the commencement of this century,

the popular literature of astronomy was in no very palmy condition. Fontenelle, indeed, had defended, with much acuteness and elegance, the doctrine of a "plurality of worlds." Addison, like a "child-angel," had prattled a wondrous prattle about the stars, in some of his Saturday "Spectators." But the real text-book of popular prose instruction on this subject was "Hervey's Meditations"—a book written by a good man, but feeble writer, and chiefly distinguished by its inane glitter. But now—not to speak of our excellent and venerable friend Dr Dick, whose lucid, interesting, and widely-read books have done so much to popularise the theme—the genius of Chalmers, Isaac Taylor, and others, has made up for the indifference of ages. Still, Nichol is the *prose* laureate of the stars. From his writings ascends hitherto the richest tribute of mingled intelligence of their laws—love for their beauty—admiration of their still strong order—hope in the prospects of mankind, as reflected in their mirror—and sense, ever profound and near, of that unseen Power who counts their numbers, sustains their motions, and makes their thousand eyes the organs and the symbols of His omniscience.

In some of the professor's recent works, such as his "Observations on the System of the World," and his preface to Willm's "Education," we have been a little annoyed at the quantity of careless writing they contain—at once loose, obscure, and incorrect—and have been tempted to lay the blame now upon his printers, and now upon his own most incomprehensible and *nebulous handwriting*.

We take our leave of this subject with considerable regret, both because we are always sorry to part from a frank, friendly, and intelligent companion like Dr Nichol, and because we are even yet sorrier to leave a theme so fascinating, even to an unscientific writer, as the "star-eyed science." We cannot close without alluding to the death some time ago of Miss Herschel, long the associate of Sir William in his midnight observations, and to whom our author pays an eloquent compliment, in his "Architecture of the Heavens." After long enjoying the brilliant reputation of her brother, and the equally wide and true, if not so brilliant, reputation of her nephew—retaining, amid the chills of extreme age, all the ardour of her enthusiasm, and engaged, it is said, to the last in her favourite pursuit—she has fallen asleep. Every astronomer, surely, is ready to envy her fate, so far as her retaining to the end her post is concerned. To die at the telescope is surely a nobler destiny than to die at the cannon, or on the throne.

CARLYLE AND STERLING.*

THIS volume has, for some months past, been expected, with a kind of fearful curiosity, by the literary public. As for the second shock of an earthquake—after the first had sucked a street into its jaws—so had men, in silence and terror, been waiting for its avatar. Every one was whispering to every other, "What a bombshell is about to fall from Thomas Carlyle's battery! Nothing like it, we fear, since the 'Model Prisons.' Let our theologians look to it!" Well, the book has come at last, and, notwithstanding the evil *animus* of parts of it, a milder, more tender, and more pleasant gossiping little volume we have not read for many a day. The mountain has been in labour, and lo! a nice lively field-mouse, quite frisky and good-humoured, has been brought forth. It is purely ridiculous and contemptible to speak, with some of our contemporaries, of this volume as Mr Carlyle's best, or as, in any sense, a great work. The subject, as *he* has viewed it, was not great, and his treatment of it, while exceedingly

* Life of John Sterling. By THOMAS CARLYLE.

graceful and pleasant, is by no means very powerful or very profound.

In fact, we look on it as a clever evasion of the matter in hand. Why were the public so deeply interested in John Sterling? Not on account of his genius, which was of a high, but not the highest order, and was not at all familiar, in its fruits at least, to the generality. He was not a popular author. His conversational powers and private virtues were known only to his friends. But his mind, as we saw in a former paper, had passed through certain speculative changes, which invested him with a profound and rather morbid interest, and gave him a typical or representative character. He had been in youth a sceptic of rather an ultra school. In early manhood he became a Coleridgean Christian, and an active curate, and ere he died he relapsed into a modified and refined form of scepticism again. This constituted the real charm which attracted men to Sterling. This was the circle of lurid glory which bound his head, and by which we tracked his steps through his devious and dangerous wanderings.

But of all this in this book there is far too little, although, in another sense, that little is all too much. Sterling's private story is very minutely and beautifully detailed. The current of his literary career (a river flowing under ground!) is as carefully mapped out as if it had been a Nile or a Ganges—a broad blessing to nations. But over the struggles of his inner life, the steps, swift or slow, by which he passed from Radical Rationalism to Christianity, and thence to Straussism or Carlylism, there is cast a veil, through which very little light, indeed, is allowed to glimmer. To show how unfair and unsatisfactory this plan of treatment is, let us conceive a new life of Blanco White, in which all his changes of opinion were slurred over; or a life of Dr Arnold, in which his achievements as a schoolmaster and a politician were faithfully chronicled, but the religious phases of his history were ignored. Now Sterling's fame is, even more than theirs, based on his reputation as an honest and agonised inquirer, and it is too bad to cloak up the particulars of those earnest researches under general terms, and to give us, instead of the information for which we were panting, pictures of Welsh or West Indian scenery, one or two vague ravings about the "Bedlam delusions" of our day, and the "immensities and eternities"—or letters so selected or so garbled, that they shall cast no light upon the more secret and interesting passages of his spiritual history.

The gentleness of the tone of the work, although only comparative, is an agreeable change from that of the "Latter-Day Pamphlets," the language of which was frequently as coarse and vulgar, as the spirit was fierce, and the views one-sided. The Indian summer is often preceded by a short but severe storm, and, perhaps, is softer and more golden in proportion to the roughness of the tempest. Mr Carlyle, here, seems absolutely *in love!* Not above ten sentences of vituperation occur in the 344 pages. We suspect that the reception of the "Model Prisons" has taught him that even *his* dynasty is not infallible, and that bulls from Chelsea must modify their bellowings, if they would not wish to be treated like bulls from the Vatican. Whether he be or be not aware of the fact, his giant shadow is passing from off the face of the public mind, nor will the present change of tone retard its downgoing. It is *too late.* The gospel of negations has had its day, and served its generation, and must give place to another and a nobler evangel.

The book is most interesting from its relation to the biographer, and its true name is "Sterling's Carlyle." Few as the religious allusions in it are, they are such as leave no doubt upon our minds as to Carlyle's own views. His sneers at Coleridge's theosophic moonshine—at Sterling's belief in a "personal God:" his suppression of an argument on this subject, drawn out by Sterling in a letter to himself (page 152)—his language in page 126, "no stars—nor ever were, save certain *old Jew ones, which have gone out*" — the unmitigated contempt he pours out here and there on the clergy, and on the Church, and, by inference

and insinuation, upon the "traditions" and the "incredibilities" of Christianity —all point to the foregone conclusion, which he has, we fear, long ago reached. With this conclusion we do not at present mean to grapple; but we mean to mark, and very strongly to condemn, the manner and spirit in which he has, although only here and there, stated and enforced it.

Now, in the first place, although he must be sceptical, why should he be profane? He may *curse*, but why should he *swear?* He may despise hypocrisy, and trample on cant, but why should he insult sincere, albeit weak-minded belief? Why such words as these, in reference to a Methodist, who had displayed, in critical circumstances, a most heroic and noble degree of *courage!*—"The last time I heard of him, he was a prosperous, modest dairyman, thankful for the upper light, and for *deliverance from the wrath to come.*"

Words these, "wrath to come," which shook the souls of Cromwell, Milton, and Howe, to their depths; which are still capable of moving millions to fear, to faith, to morality, and to love; and which yet can only excite Mr Carlyle to contemptuous derision. If there be one thought in the Christian theology more tremendous than another, it is that of an unceasing outflow of just vengeance, like a "pulsing aurora of wrath," like an ever-rising sun of shame and fear, like a storm, the clouds of which return after the rain—not to be compared to other wrathful phenomena, to the thunder-cloud which gathers, bursts, passes on to other lands, or to other worlds, while the blue sky arises behind it in its calm immortality; nor to the pestilence, which breaks out like the sudden springing of a mine, stamps with its foot and awakens death, but passes quickly away, and leaves the joy of health and security behind; nor to the earthquake, which starts up like a giant from his slumber, heaves mountains, troubles oceans, swallows up cities, but speedily subsides, and again the eternal hills rest and are silent; but to itself only, for it alone deserves the name of wrath! And without dogmatising or speculating on the character or extent of this predicted vengeance, surely a sneer can neither explain, nor illuminate, nor prevent its coming! There are many besides poor Methodistic miners who tremble at the words, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," and one of them, unless we are much mistaken, is, at times, the melancholy Polyphemus of Chelsea.

Secondly, why does he so often edge his evident earnestness with a levity and a mockery which remind you of Voltaire himself? Why thus delight in forming an ungainly and horrible hybrid? Deep solemn thought is on his brow; love is swimming wildly in his eye; but a sneer, keen as if it were the essence of all sneers, past, present, and to come, ever and anon palpitates on his lips. Why is this? Even as an engine of assault, such ridicule is powerless. Laughter, ere it can kill, must be given forth with all one's heart and soul, and mind and strength; must be serious, and total. But Thomas Carlyle cannot thus laugh at any sincere faith; his mirth, like Cromwell's speeches, "breaks down," chokes in his throat, or dies away in a quaver of consternation. But why ever begin what his heart will not permit him to finish?

Thirdly, his contempt for the office of the Christian ministry is so violent, and almost ferocious, as to increase the suspicion that he loves Christianity as little as he does its clergy. He speaks of Sterling's brief curateship as the great mistake of his life—nay, as if it amounted to a stain and crime. It did not appear so to poor Sterling himself, who, when dying, begged for the old Bible he used at Herstmonceux among the cottages, and seems to have died with it in his arms. It does not appear so to us. A curate, however mistaken, "going about doing good," is a nobler spectacle, we fancy, than a *littérateur* at his desk inditing sneers at Christianity. Sir James Mackintosh thought otherwise of ministerial work, when he congratulated Hall on having turned from philosophy and letters, to the "far nobler task of soothing the afflicted, succouring the distressed, and *remembering the for-*

gotten." We have no passion verily for "surplices," nor respect for many whom they cover; but we know that they have been worn by men whose shoe-latchets neither John Sterling nor Thomas Carlyle are worthy to unloose; and are still worn by some at least their equals in powers and in virtues, in scrupulosity of conscience and in tenderness and dignity of walk. John Sterling would have been a far better, happier, and greater man, had he remained a working curate to the last, instead of becoming a sort of petty Prometheus, equally miserable, and nearly as idle, with a big black crow (elegantly mistaken for a vulture) pecking at his morbid liver. And, for our part, we would rather be a humble city missionary, grappling with vulgar sin and misery, in the lanes of one of our cities—nay, a little child repeating, "Jesus, tender shepherd, hear me," at his mother's knee, than sit with Sartor on his burning throne!

We have something more still to add. We respect and love much about Mr Carlyle; we think him naturally a great, earnest, truehearted man. We sympathise cordially with his crusade against shams. But we should like him to "deliver his soul" more even than here, on a topic to which he often alludes, but on which he is never so explicit as he should be—Christianity. We think we know his sentiments on the subject. He does not, we fear, acknowledge its peculiar and divine claims. Seeing clearly that there are but two alternatives, revelation or despair, he has deliberately chosen the latter. The authority of the Bible is one of those things "which the light of his own mind, the direct inspiration of the Almighty, pronounces incredible."

But a large proportion of the public are still in the dark as to his religious sentiments. We have heard him claimed by intelligent ministers of the Free Church of Scotland as a Christian, nay, a Puritan. Others, not quite so far astray, look upon his religious opinions as uncertain, vague, indefinite, perhaps not yet fully formed. This is the fault of his mystic and tantalising mode of expression. Not every eye can pierce through the fantastic veil he wears, and see behind it the features of a mere nature and duty worshipper. That veil, we think, he is, as an honest and earnest man, bound entirely to drop. Masks may be pardoned in a tournament, but not in hot and eager battle. The question as to the truth of Christianity has become the engrossing question of this age, and we cannot now bear with men who appear to halt between two opinions. The cry was never more distinctly or loudly sounded than it is at present, "Who is on the Lord's side, who?" Differences of opinion on minor matters of religion may be pardoned; "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy" have become terms equally unmeaning, and equally contemptible. But this is now the point at issue: is Christianity, as a whole, a truth or a falsehood, a sham or a reality —*the* lie of the earth, or the one thing in its history worth loving, valuing, or trusting in? While the more resolute of sceptics, such as the worthies of the "Westminster Review," have taken their stand, and proclaimed "war to the knife," and while the defenders of Christianity are buckling on their armour, it will not much longer do for men like Mr Carlyle to utter an uncertain sound, and to hang off on the outskirts of the great battle. In this "Life of Sterling," its author had a good opportunity of declaring himself fully on the subject, and the public were expecting it; but they have been again doomed to disappointment.

With regard to John Sterling, there is not very much added to our previous information; but beautiful lights, like the golden gleams of an autumn afternoon, are cast upon his character. His "nomadic" existence—a wanderer in evasion of death—is most picturesquely narrated. Bute, Glamorganshire, Madeira, St Vincent, Italy, and Clifton, all sit for portraits, which are alike faithful and poetic. Old Sterling of the "Times"—"Captain Whirlwind"—comes and goes in a very striking manner. Coleridge sits in Highgate, weaving endless webs of "theosophic moonshine," or walks along both sides of the garden gravel, from uncertainty as to which to take! (Hazlitt, we remember,

describes him even when young as perpetually crossing the road, and ascribes it to instability of purpose.) And the various members of the Sterling Club, including Carlyle himself, are introduced at intervals, to add life and interest to the somewhat melancholy and monotonous story.

It is indeed a sad narrative. John Sterling died a young man; but he had passed through ages of bodily suffering and mental endurance. He "lived fast," although not in the common sense of that expression. His life was one hectic fever; and yet his peculiarly buoyant and sanguine temperament enabled him to endure with grace and dignity. His mental struggles, though severe, were not of that awful earthquaking kind which shook the soul of Arnold, and drove Sartor howling through the Everlasting No, like a lion caught in a forest of fire. It was rather a swift succession of miseries, than one deep devouring anguish. Yet the close was truly tragical. How affecting the words of his last letter to his biographer, "I tread the common road into the great darkness without any thought of fear, and with very much of hope. Certainty, indeed, I have none."

He adds, in reference to Carlyle, "Towards me it is still more true than towards England, that no man has been, and done like you." We are tempted to a very opposite conclusion; we think that unintentionally Mr Carlyle was the means of mortal injury to Sterling's mind. He shook his attachment to Coleridge, and thus to Christianity; stripping him of that garment of "moonshine," he left him naked. Shattering the creed Sterling had attained, he supplied him with no other. That Sterling was friendly and grateful to him to the last, is abundantly evident; but that he was satisfied with his position on that cold, Goethe-like, godless crag to which Mr Carlyle's hand had helped him up, is not so clear; his calling for the Bible in his last hours, is against the supposition that he was.* He took, at least, a Protestant extreme unction. We can almost fancy the stern Sartor in his last moments doing the same; and, as is fabulously reported of Godwin, "making a good end as a Methodist."

The book does not at all modify our verdict of Sterling's literary character. He was rather brilliant than profound; rather swift than strong; rather a man of rare ingenuity and culture, than a man of transcendent genius. He was more of a rapid runner, than of a sturdy athlete. His powers were singularly varied and versatile; and though he has left nothing behind him which the world shall not willingly let die, he has done so much, and that so well, as to excite keen regret at his premature departure. We think prose, and not poetry, was his proper department, and that in one region—that, namely, of high and solemn fiction—he would have had few superiors. Mr Carlyle predicates great things of a poem on Cœur-de-Lion, which he left unfinished. Why is it not given to the world? His "Onyx Ring" is perhaps the best of his productions. In it he shadows forth Goethe and Carlyle, as Walsingham and Collins. Both portraitures are true to the life. The polished colossal coldness of the great German, and the wild, unhappy fire of the Scotchman, are made to give and lend illustration and relief to each other. His views of Goethe, Mr Carlyle affirms, underwent a change, and he died, it seems, a profound worshipper of the "Pagan," as he had previously called him. He might, had he lived, have altered his opinion again. Mr Carlyle's inordinate attachment to Goethe has always seemed to us inscrutable. It is the fire-king worshipping a gigantic iceberg—a pure man adoring a splendid sensualist — a sincere man admiring a consummate courtier—the most ardent worshipping the coldest of all men of genius—'tis verily a great mystery. We can only solve it upon the principle of those marriages where the parties seem to have selected each other on account of their absolute and ideal unlikeness.

We enter here on the questions suggested by this book on the present state

* Since writing the above, we saw an acquaintance of Sterling's, who assured us that he did *not* die a Carlylist, but a Christian.

of religion. Suffice it to say, that our conviction is decided (and that of the age shall soon come to the same point), that there is nothing more to be expected from Carlylism; that bombshell has burst, and its fragments are coloured with the blood of John Sterling, and hundreds besides him! The city "No," to use the prophet's language, has been long a "populous city;" but its population must become thinner. The "everlasting Yea," on the other hand, has fair turrets and golden spires; but it is a city in the clouds, abandoned, too, by its builder; there is no such place, either in this world or in that which is to come. There seems nothing for it but downright naturalism, which means flat desperation, or a return to Christianity, in a new, higher, and more hopeful form. *We*, at least, have made up our minds to cling to the old banner of the Cross; expecting that, since Jesus has already shaken the world by his accents as no man ever did, he has only to speak "once more," at his own time, and in the language of the "two-edged sword" which issues from his glorified lips—to revolutionise society, to purify the thrashing-floor of his church, and to introduce that "milder day" for which, in all dialects and in all ages, the true, the noble, the gifted, and the pious, have been breathing their prayers. If we err in this, we err in company with John Milton, and with many only less than he.

Since writing part of this critique, we have read the "Times" on "Carlyle's Sterling." We are, in general, no admirers of that "perpetual Prospectus," that gigantic Jesuit of the press, that Cerberus with three heads, three tongues, and no heart; which can be bribed, though not bought; sopped, but not enticed to the upper air (and the Hercules to drag up this dog of darkness has not yet arrived); but we have for once been delighted with an effusion from Printing-house Square. The thunderbolts are well fabricated, and are strongly pointed at Mr Carlyle's entirely negative and unsatisfactory mode of thought; at his systematic, though *sub voce*, depreciation of Christianity; at the gloomy bile which spots the splendour of his genius; at the charges of "cowardice" and weakness which he dashes in the face of every one who ventures to believe Christianity, or to pray to the Almighty Father; at the deliberate darkness he piles, or at least leaves unmitigated, around the religious creed and last experiences of poor Sterling; and at the fierce and disgusting dogmatism, which is often his substitute for logic, and his *pis aller* for inspiration. But we do not believe, with the "Times," that in this book Thomas's wrath has got to its height; for, in fact, it is mere milk-and-water compared to his "Pamphlets;" nor do we think that his *temper* is his greatest fault; *pride*, according to the measure of a demon, is his raging sin; and no words in Scripture are more repulsive to him than these, "Except a man become as a little child, he shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven." But none *are more true*, and, to a large portion of men, none more terrible.

EMERSON.*

THE fame of Emerson has had a singular cycle of history, within the last thirteen years, in Britain. His first Essays, republished in 1841, with a preface by Carlyle, were, on the whole, coldly welcomed by the public; with the exceptions of the "Eclectic Review" (which praised their genius while condemning their opinions) and "Tait's Magazine," the monthly and quarterly press either ignored or abused them. Their admirers, indeed, were very ardent, but they were very few, and principally young men, whose enthusiasm was slightly shaded with a sceptical tendency. Between this period and his visit to Britain, in 1848, a great revolution in

* The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson.

his favour had taken place. The publication of a second volume of Essays, still more peculiar and daring than the first, the re-appearance of his tractate, entitled "Nature"—the most complete and polished of all his works—the deepening enthusiasm of his admirers, and the exertions of one or two of them, who had gained the ear of the public, and were determined to fill it with his fame, as well as the real merit of his writings, had amply prepared the country for his approach, when, among the last days of 1847, he set the impress of his foot upon our shores. Then his name and influence came to a culminating point, and ever since they seem to us to have declined. For this, various causes may be assigned.

In the first place, his appearance disappointed many; they did not meet the rapt, simple, dreaming enthusiast of whom they had been dreaming.

Secondly, his Lectures were chiefly *double entendres*. There were alike commissions and omissions in them, which proved this to a certainty. We have seen him scanning an audience ere he resolved which of two lectures he should give. Think of Paul on Mars Hill balancing between two Greek variations of his immortal speech; or, on consideration, choosing another text than "Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye worship DEMONS too much." We have heard of him, too, sacrificing, to suit an audience, the principal pith, marrow, and meaning of a whole lecture; as if, in quoting the words, "thou shalt worship the Lord thy God," he had slily and *sub voce* substituted the little word "not." Nay, even when there was no such disingenuous concealment or subtraction, there was a game of "hide-and-seek" continually going on—a use of Scripture phrases in an unscriptural sense, a trimming, and turning, and terror at the prejudices of his audience, altogether unworthy of his genius. Indeed, we wonder that the tribe of expectant materialists in England and Scotland, with Holyoake and George Combe at their head, had not, disgusted at the doubledealing of their American champion, met at Berwick-upon-Tweed, and burned him in effigy. *They*, at least, are direct, and honest, and thoroughgoing men, we mean animals, for they are perpetually boasting of their lineal descent from brutes, and reptiles, and fishes, and slime, and everything but God, and we are not disposed to deny *their* far-come *and dearly-won honours*, or to quarrel, so far as *they* are concerned, with this mud heraldry.

Thirdly, the better portion of the age is fast becoming sick of all systems of mere negation. And what else is Emerson's? Any man who has ever thought for himself is competent to deny, and even to make his system of denial almost impregnable. A child of six or seven is quite able to trace the syllable No. To use again the allusion of the prophet, "it is a populous city—*No*;" and assuredly Emerson keeps one of its principal gates. But, with the exception of a mangled Platonism, there is not a trace of system, or of progressive advancement in thought, in all his writings. In one part of them he makes man's soul all; in a second, he makes nature all; and, in a third, he magnifies some shadowy abstraction which he calls the "Oversoul," a sort of sublime overhead negro-driver, compelling men to hell or heaven, as seems good in his own blind eyes. In one place he declares that society never advances, and in another he gives a chart of a Millennium in society which love is by "pushing" to produce. Contradictory intuitions, as he would call them, abound in almost every page, and the question naturally arises, Which are we to believe? which of the deliverances of this Paul-Pyrrho, this oracular sceptic, this captive to the "Oversoul," are we to receive as *his?* To refute them were difficult, because, in the first place, it is not easy to see what some of them are; because, secondly, he often saves us the trouble, by contradicting others next page or volume himself; and because, thirdly, while it is the simplest matter in the world to rear or to dwell in the "City No," it is the most difficult matter to overturn it. It is like hunting a dream, or trampling on a shade, or fitting out an expedition to overset Aladdin's palace.

Such are some of the reasons why

Emerson's influence over the young, sincere, and liberal minds of the age must rapidly go down—like an October sun, very bright, but which is too late for ripening anything, and which, after a brief meridian and a briefer afternoon, sinks, as if in haste and confusion, below the horizon. Another reason we are reluctantly, and in deep sorrow, compelled to add—Emerson is *one* of the *few sceptics* who has *personally*, and by *name*, insulted the Lord Jesus Christ, and, through him, that Humanity of which Jesus is the Hope, the Glory, the Ideal, and the Crown. This extreme Carlyle has always avoided, and he has never spoken of Christ, or of the Divine Mystery implied in him, but with deep reverence. Many other of the sublimer order of doubters have been equally guarded. But Emerson, with Julian the Apostate, Voltaire, Paine, and Francis Newman, must bear the brand of using language to Christ which no man of culture would now apply to a Cæsar, a Danton, or a Napoleon. He says, "this *shoves* Jesus and Judas both aside." He speaks, again, of Christ's "tropes," as if the man who died on Calvary because he *would* not lie, was an exaggerator and a rhetorician, when he said, "I and my Father are one;" or, "he that has seen me, has seen the Father."

We have heard a dog baying at the moon—we have heard of a maniac spitting foam at the stars—we have watched the writhings of crushed mediocrity as it gazed on the bright pages of genius—and we have understood, excused, pitied, and forgiven all such in their morbid or mistaken feelings. But how one calling himself a man, and reputed really a man of genius, could, in his most unhappy hour, have uttered a word against our Brother—God—the Eternal Child—the Babe in the Manger—the Boy in the Temple—the Carpenter in the Shed—the Weeper at the Grave—the Sufferer on the Cross—the Risen from the Tomb—the Exalted to the Heavens—the Friend by eminence of our fallen Family—the Expected from the Clouds—the Type and Test of whatever is holy, and charitable, and lovely, and lofty in the race of man—passes our conceptions, and has strained to its utmost *our* power of forgiveness.

Why, we must also inquire, has he said such things, and yet not said more of Jesus? "What thinkest thou of Christ?" If he was an impostor, say so. If he was a madman, say so. If he is merely the conventional ideal of human nature, say so more distinctly. If he is neither, nor all of these, then *what is he?* whence has he come? Emerson, while striking hard, and often, and openly, at the divinity of Jesus, and not sparing quiet *sotto voce* insinuations against his character and his power over the minds of men, has never yet propounded, or sought to propound, any probable or intelligible theory of Christ. He has simply, with muttered, or more than muttered, sneers or sighs over his unacknowledged claims, turned away, refusing to look at or to worship this "great sight."

Man seems the Christ of Emerson. And a sorry Christ he is. "Man," says Bacon, "is the god of the dog;" but were a dog fancying himself a man, it were a supposition less monstrous than the universal Immanuelism of Emerson. If man be the Christ, where are the works which prove him so? If every man has the divinity within him, why are the majority of men so corrupt and malignant? If the history of man be the history of God in human nature, why is it little else than one tissue of blood, falsehood, and low sin? We think he might far more plausibly start and defend the hypothesis that man *is* the devil; and that his history has hitherto been but a long development of diabolism. And, in proving this, he might avail himself to great advantage of Quetelet's tables, which demonstrate the significant fact, that certain works of a rather infernal character, such as murder, arson, and rape, re-appear in steady and mathematical succession, and, according to him, no more than summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, are ever to cease. The presence of such an eternal law would go far to prove that man was an immutable and hopeless child of hell.

Many strange deductions seem to follow from Emerson's theory, nay, are more or

less decidedly admitted by him. If man be the Christ or God incarnate, then there can be no such thing as guilt, and there ought to be no such thing as punishment. Whatever is done, is done, not by God's permission or command, but by God himself. God is at once the judge and the offender. If man be God incarnate, it follows that he is the creator of all things. This Emerson repeatedly intimates. The sun is but a splendid mote in man's eye; the moon is but his produced and prolonged smile; the earth is the shadow of his shape; the stars are lustres in the room of his soul; the universe is the bright precipitate of his thought. He is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning of the Creation of God and its ending too. "The simplest person," he says, "who in his integrity worships God, *becomes* God." It follows, again, that no supernaturalism ever did or ever could exist. It was, according to Emerson, Moses, not Jehovah, who spoke on Sinai. It was Isaiah's own human soul which saw the fate of empires as distinctly as we see stars falling through the midnight. It was the mere man Christ Jesus who taught, and worked, and died in Judea. The possibility, in like manner, of any future revelation from heaven is ignored—ignored by the denial of any heaven save the mind of man. This is the dunghill-Olympus on which Emerson seats his shadowy gods. And whatever strange and aerial-seeming shapes may hereafter appear upon its summit, are to be in reality only sublimated mud—the beauty and the strength of—dirt. "Man," to use Foster's language, is to produce an "apotheosis of himself, by the hopeful process of exhausting his own corruptions," or sublimating them into a putrid holiness.

It follows, again, that, whatever he may say in particular passages, there can be no advancing or steady progress in humanity. The laws which develop it are unchangeable, the climate in which it lives is subject to very slight variations; its "Oversoul" is a stern demon, with, perhaps, as he says, "a secret kindness in its heart," but outwardly a very Moloch of equal calm and cruelty; and under his eye, society and man must work, and bleed, and suffer on, upon this rolling earth, as on an eternal treadmill in a mist. 'Tis a gospel of despair, which in reality he teaches, of the deepest and the most fixed despair. The dungeon into which he introduces his captives is cold and low; it has no outlet: no key called Promise is to be found therein; the sky, indeed, is seen above through the dome, but it is distant —dark—with strange and melancholy stars, and but one hope, like a cup of prison-water, is handed round among the dwellers in this dreary abode—that of Death. And yet, but of late thousands of our young, rising, and gifted minds were, and many are still, forsaking the free atmosphere, the strait but onward way, and the high-hung star of hope, and Christianity, for this dismal, insulated, and under-ground abyss, where the very light is as darkness. It follows, again, that humility and all its cognate virtues are mere mistakes. "Trust thyself—every heart vibrates to that iron string." A greater than Emerson said, two thousand years ago, "Blessed are the poor *in spirit*, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven;" and another of the same school said, "When ye are weak, then are ye strong." We are not defending a false or voluntary humility. But surely, unless you can prove that all strength, and purity, and peace, are enclosed in yourself, to bow before the higher—to draw strength from the stronger—to worship the divine—is the dictate of cultured instinct, as well as of common sense. Almost all the powers and elements of nature combine in teaching man the one great simple word, "bend." "Bend," the winds say it to the tall pines, and they gain the curve of their magnificence by obeying. "Bend," gravitation says it to the earth, as she sweeps in her course round the sun; and she knows the whisper of her ruler, and stoops and bows before the skyey blaze. "Bend," the proud portals of human knowledge say it to all aspirants; and were it the brow of a Bacon or a Newton, it must in reverence bow. "Bend," the doors, the ancient doors of heaven say it, in the music of their golden hinges, to all who would pass therein; and

the Son of Man himself, although he could have prayed to his Father, and presently obtained twelve legions of angels, had to learn obedience, to suffer, to bow the head, ere as a King of Glory he entered in. "Trust thyself." No; Christianity says, "Mistrust thyself—trust God. Do thy humble duty, and call the while on the lofty help that is above thee." Even Shelley, a far more gifted mind than Emerson, tells us, borrowing the thought from Burke, to "*fear* ourselves, and love all human-kind."

It follows, finally, that there seems no hope to us from the exclusive and idolatrous devotion to nature which Emerson has practised and recommends. He, appearing to believe that nature is his *own* work, has conned its pages with all the fondness which a young author feels for his first poems. And yet he has learned from it, or at least taught us, extremely little. If he has, as he says, met "God in the bush," why no particulars of the interview? Why no intelligible precept, no new law, from that "burning bush" of the West? Why does nature, in his hands, remain as cold, silent, enigmatic, and repulsive—we mean as a moral teacher—as ever it was? Why does its "old silence" remain silent still, or only insult us with fragments of mysticism and echoes of blasphemy? Alas! Emerson's "Essays" are another proof of what Hazlitt, from bitter experience, said long ago, "Neither poetry nor nature are sufficient for the soul of man."

The fact is (and we are grieved to announce it), this writer, with all his talk about spiritualism and idealism, seems to us in essence, if anything at all, a mere materialist—believing not, however, in the wide matter of suns and stars, but in the sublimated matter of his proper brain. He has brought the controversy of ages to a point—the point of his own head. This he claps and clasps, and says, "Talk of God. Heaven, Jesus, Shakspere, the earth, the stars—it's *all here*." Even as, not long ago, we heard a poor woman, in fever, declaring that there was "more sense in her head than in all the world besides!" And into what wilds have some of his followers, both in America and here, wandered, till, in search of their master, they have lost themselves. One of them will make an earth-heap among the woods, and show his companions how God *should* make a world. Others take to living on acorns and water; and one lady, of some abilities, has lately written a small volume of poems, in which, amid many other symptoms of the most rabid Emersonianism, such as sneering at the power and influence of the Bible, magnifying the soul, &c., she, in one little copy of verses, avows herself a *worshipper of the Sun*—it being the epic, we suppose, of *her* transcendent spirit!

It is high time that all such egregious nonsense should be exposed; and we only regret that our space does not permit us more fully at present to expose it. We "bide our time." And we can speak the more freely, that *we* have passed through a section of the Emersonian shadow ourselves—never into its deepest gloom, but along the outskirts of its cold and hopeless darkness. *We*, however, never lost our faith in Jesus, nor regarded Emerson's notions of Him with any other feelings but disgust and sorrow. *We* never "kissed our hands" to the sun. But we at one time regarded Emerson as a sincere man, astray on one of the by-paths from the road leading up to the "City." We have seen reason to change our mind, and to say of him, and of all such, "Beware of the Flatterer." His system, to our knowledge, has shaken belief, has injured morality, has poisoned the purest natures, has embittered the sweetest tempers, has all but maddened the strongest minds, has been for years a thick cosmical cloud between lofty souls and the God of their childhood and their fathers, has not even led to that poor, beggarly, outwardly clean life, in which many of his followers, if not himself, seem to believe all morality to consist (as if the plagues of the *soul* were not infinitely worse than the diseases of the body), and has led to life "without hope and without God in the world." And without laying all the blame of this—and it has been the experience of hundreds—upon Emerson

himself, we do advisedly lay it upon the back of his heartless and hopeless creed.

After all this, to speak of Emerson's genius seems mere impertinence. It is little to the point, and, besides, has often been largely descanted on by us and others. It is undoubtedly of a high order. If he cannot interpret, he can paint, nature as few else can. He has the deepest egotistic interest in her. He appropriates her to himself, and because he loves and clasps, imagines that he has made her. His better writings seem shaken, sifted, and cooled in the winds of the American autumn. The flush on his style is like the red hue of the Indian summer inscribed upon the leaf. One of the most inconsistent and hopelessly wrong of American thinkers, he is the greatest of American poets. We refer not to his verse—which is, in general, woven mist, involving little—but to the beautiful and abrupt utterances about nature in his prose. No finer things about the outward features, and the transient meanings of creation, have been said, since the Hebrews, than are to be found in some of his books. But he has never, like them, pierced to the grand doctrine of the Divine Personality and Fatherhood.

SMIBERT AND THE HIGHLANDS.*

THIS is truly a splendid volume. Whether we look to its exterior or its interior—to the pink cover, decorated with the golden thistle to "Scotia dear"—or to the many beautiful specimens of tartan, which add a rainbow of lustre to its pages—or to the plain, clear type—or to the interesting, varied, and richly anecdotical letter-press—we have seen few ornamental books, for years, which can vie with it. No book, assuredly, since Stewart of Garth's "History of the Highland Regiments," has appeared one-half so attractive to Highlanders, or to any, whether in Scotland or England, who have the Highland blood flowing in their veins, or any admiration for the scenery of the Highlands. We feel ourselves, on the double wings of this elegant history, and on the rich sunshine of an August afternoon, wafted away to the mountains of Scotland. The land, which in maps seems to blacken into massive grandeur as one casts his eye northwards, opens before us its dark barriers, and we pass, as permitted guests, amid its wild and primitive scenery. There arise, first of all, its unplanted heights, the dwellings of the storm and the eagle—its old granite rocks—its clefts of everlasting snow—its heathy wildernesses lying serene around, as if they had long ago forgotten to mourn for their desolation, but were cherishing it, as a solitary source of pride—its bold, barren peaks, sharp, fixed, and silent as death. Then there are the thousand lakes of the mountain land, spotting its sterility with peace; some like large drops of silver—others like still, bright plates—others like abortive rivers, struggling in vain against their barriers—and others pulsing in correspondence and reply to the pulse of the everlasting ocean. Then there are its woodlands—from the coppice of the glen to the great pines of the forests—feathering the sides of the mountains, and casting the shadows of their round tops upon the precipices which tower above them. Then there are the green vales, winding onwards through the dark hills, and, as they run, expanding like rivers into the clear, broad, sunny straths, which lie along the landscape, like friths of verdure and beauty. Then there are the streams and the cataracts, the noisy tenants of a silent land: here gliding with peaceful murmur, there fretted into childish fury by the opposition of rocks, or by the coercion of channels—here sunk in woods, and there rushing lonely through the solitary moor—here forming narrow channels, over which the

* "The Clans of the Highlands." Edited by Thomas Smibert, Esq.

hunter springs with disdain, and there wide streams, or sounding waterfalls, the voice of which becomes the poetry and the devotion of adjacent glens. Then there are the regions where the mountains sink down upon the vales, and the vales rise towards the mountains—where the rivers wed each other, and the little wooded hills stand up as witnesses beside the nuptials, and the beauties of the Highlands and the Lowlands are peacefully harmonised. Then, either set in the silvery lakes, or placed

"Far amid the melancholy main,"

there are the Isles—those fairy children of the great mother—some green as emerald, others black in their moss and heather; some decorated with hollow ruins, others naked and desolate; some forming columned portals to the sea, and others which, like Arran, in the size, the rugged grandeur, and uniqueness of their scenery, seem repining at the destiny which keeps them subordinate to the mainland, and their mountains from mating with their proud neighbours—Goatfell looking with envious eye to Ben Lomond! And then, spread around all, there is the waste of ocean, with its waves speaking in thunder up the ironbound cliffs of the unconquered and unconquerable land.

Such is our *ideal geography* of the Highlands. But the landscape is also populous with figures, dead or living, fictitious or real. It is sprinkled with the habitations of men—with the shielings of shepherds, lying at the base of high rocks, or at the side of dark lochs, or in the ferny hollows of moors—with farmhouses, standing half-way up the braes, and shadowed by large plane-trees or birches—with castles, frowning, in feudal dignity, over lands which bend before them no more, save for the beauty and grandeur which still gather around their walls—with far-seen and solitary churches of God, set in the midst of lonely burying-places, where, amid thick grass and nettles, and beneath a canopy of trees, whispering "Resurrection,"

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet lie"

—with humble huts, which seem seeking for deeper obscurity in the earth which is rising around them like a wave—with whitewashed wayside inns, offering rest and refreshment to the wayfaring man—and with villages and towns—some pierced by arrowy streams, others looking down upon waters newly wed, others washed by lakes, others marking the verge and steeped in the shadow of great tracts of woodland, and others listening all the year long to the heaving and panting prayer which ascends from the ocean billow. Above these living or solitary scenes, there appear the traditionary heroes of the past, meet inhabitants of a region so sublime. There are the skin-clad and painted Caledonians, like red-scarred pine-trees in motion—the great Galgacus at their head. There are the heroes of "Ossian:" Fingal, retiring to his hill, or smiting at the Spirit of Loda; Cuchullin, seated at Tura's well, 'neath the tree of the rustling sound; Fillan, dying in his glorious youth; Ossian himself, the last of his race, answering the plaints of the wilderness—the plover's shriek, the hiss of the homeless stream, the bee in the heather bloom, the rustle in the birch above his head, the roar of the cataract behind—in a voice of kindred freedom and kindred melancholy, and conversing less with the little men around him than with the giant spirits of his fathers. There are the Culdees, nestling, like the conies, in their rocks, or praying in their mountain oratories, or changing Iona into the Eye of the Western Isles. Then follow, down the after ages, in shadowy march, the Clans, with their airy tartans fluttering in the breeze, and blood staining all their raiment. Mixing with, or looking over them, there appear the imaginary peoples of the haunted land—here dance the fairies, and there gibber the ghosts—here screams the water-kelpie from his pool, and there the brownie swelters his invisible sweat under his burden. And from the Highlands, as from some dark defile, for a century and more, how you see pouring down—Gothic invasions in miniature; army after army of fierce and half-savage soldiers, all sworn to

crush civil and religious freedom—from the Highland host which tortured the Ayrshire Covenanters, to the "reapers" who descended with Charles Edward to that "harvest of death," the last red sheaf of which was gathered on the field of Culloden!

The history of such a people, inhabiting such a land, inevitably teems with romantic incident—incident which no one desires to, and which, perhaps, now no one can, sift with sufficient severity. Every imagination, indeed, delights in seeking to stereotype the magic circle of the Highlands. We cry, in our enthusiasm, still let the Witch Element reign there, and in it let all congenial beings be free to revel! Let the fairies trip on along the soft sward of the south-lying fells, while the moon is blending her own bright yellow with their delicate green! Let ghosts sail on amid the mists of the darkening twilight of Glencoe! Let seers of the second sight continue to fall down as dead in the terrible trance of their vision, which might prostrate the mountains instead of the men! Let voices, mystic and premonitory, descend the long, deep glens at midnight, or blend mournfully with the wail of the waterfall! Let schoolboys still tremble, lest, falling into some forest pit, they should find it to be the mouth of hell! Let the shadow of the Cross still lie over the feared name of Friday! Let every one, on passing the line of the mountains, be prepared to bid doubt and philosophy farewell, and to say,

"O Fear! O frantic Fear!
I see, I see thee near!"

as he surrenders his spirit to the sublime superstitions of the land! And still, to imagination, let droves of lifted cattle pour up the passes; caterans lurk amid the woods; Roderick Dhu whistle in the gorge of Loch Vennachar; Rob Roy stand, with eagle feather in his bonnet, and gun in his hand, upon a promontory of Loch Lomond; and the "Camerons' men" rush yelling against the front rank of the southern foemen on the woful plain of Drummossie!

To supplant such associations, we know only one magic which could prevail; and that were the power of genius, native to the region, and capable of eclipsing the old by a new glory, and supplanting the superstitions of the past by the poetic miracles of the present. Such genius has not yet, strange to tell, arisen from the most poetical tract in Britain. Switzerland and the Highlands have not yet produced a really great poet, nor perhaps a really great thinker in any direction. The six first names in Scottish literature are all Lowland—Buchanan, Adam Smith, Hume, Burns, Scott, and Wilson. Macpherson, even after Mrs Grant, is still the real poet of the Highlands—and, in spite of Macaulay, a poet he was, although a forger; but his poetry, even at its best estate, does not rank with the lofty song. Campbell was born and brought up in the Lowlands. The two Maclaurins, Colin and John, were both men of genius; Colin being a great mathematician, and John the author of one of the noblest sermons in the English language, that on "Glorying in the Cross of Christ;" but their names are now little known, and their works little read. The man who, a century after death, requires to be introduced to the general public, is not, in the highest sense, a great man. Mackintosh is the highest name the Highlands have hitherto produced. We do not mean to detract from his well-earned renown as an acute metaphysician, a profound politician, an accomplished scholar, a brilliant converser, and the most candid and courteous of men; but few will now pretend that he has made any enduring or massive contribution to either the philosophy, or the jurisprudence, or the history, or the literature of his country, although capable, it is certain, of having enriched all four. A man of vast erudition and infinite accomplishment he was, but not a man of creative imagination, or of originating and suggestive thought—not a Burke, nor even equal by nature to Foster, Hall, or Chalmers. Many a Mac have the Highlands borne, but no MacJupiter—no son of genuine, god-like thunder.

Perhaps our readers are disposed to inquire the reason of this, and perhaps we

may have some difficulty in telling it. Without ascribing it, as do some, to the inferiority of the Celtic race, we would rather seek it in the want of proper stimulus, and of free circulation of mind, which was, and is, in a measure, the great want of the Highland glens. Every sound has come to them deadened by distance—every impulse weakened by the vast veil of mountains through which it must penetrate. Their people have dwelt alone, not reckoned among the nations, and their position has been always rather of a Pariah cast. Their long feuds, and their solitary position, have tended to nurture a stiff and foolish pride altogether alien to the spirit of poetry. Then their religion has always been tinged with narrowness: from the embrace of superstition they only passed into that of a rather contracted version of the Christian faith; while many of them, in leaving their mountains, by re-action, went to an opposite extreme, and fell into the first pit of infidelity that opened. Thus a generous, cordial, and benignant belief, the grand element for all high thinking and for all high poetry, has never inspired the Highland mind. When that mind, too, was beginning to open out of barbarism, its poetical development was checked by the low tendencies of the age on which it fell. The eighteenth century cast its blighting influences over the north as well as the south, and with difficulty were the wild roses of Macpherson's genius saved from the general mildew. Indeed, he was compelled to precipitate his mind back upon the past to gather inspiration; and poems which, if issued in his own name, had been contemptuously rejected, were welcomed under the prestige of an old period, when poetry was still, the men of that age thought, a thing possible. The effect of scenery upon the production of poetry has been grievously over-estimated. Where no water is, the rod even of Moses cannot extract it. Where there is no feeling of beauty or grandeur, it is beyond the magic of mountains to create it. Even when such a feeling, nay, even when genius itself exists, other influences, advantages, and inspirations are needed fully to nurse it. We can conceive a boy of genius wandering through the glens, and up the straths, and along the peaks of the mountains, cherishing the loftiest aspirations, and feeling the celestial glow of high and holy thought visiting his brow and his heart; but feeling, too, that all adequate expression was denied him. He could read, but where were books? His heart was yearning for kindred spirits, but none such were near him. The company of sheep and of mountains would sometimes tire, and, instead of inspiration, produce deep, dull-eyed stupidity of mind. The vehemence of occasional excitation—when some passing tempest, or the great shadow of a thunder-cloud, or the tongue of a river in flood heard pealing through the wilderness, or the advent, rare and strange, of a new volume to the solitary vale—lifted him up toward the Empyrean, would soon subside; and leave him weak, forlorn, and panting on the plain. On Sabbath, what could he expect but to hear the same tame or furious feebleness uttered from pulpits where the gospel was drawled forth like a lullaby, or, worse still, poured out in a coarse and loud-mouthed torrent, where hell was talked of as if it were a vast smithy-fire, and heaven as if it were a carse country, with well-filled barnyards, and all the other accompaniments of Lowland plenty? If he were to leave the circle of the mountains, what prospect, with his education and circumstances, but to sink into a commercial clerk, or, perhaps, like another Michael Bruce, to win a consumption by teaching a hedge school! The situation of the boy Burns, at Mount Oliphant or Tarbolton, was the most enviable in the world, compared to that of a youth in the Highlands, of the last or the beginning of the present century,

> "Whom Phœbus, in his ire,
> Had blasted with poetic fire."

To the truth of this picture—although of Lowland parents, and not able to speak a word of Gaelic, yet born in the throat of the Highlands—we can conscientiously testify.

From our hearts we rejoice that circumstances have fixed our present, and,

we trust, permanent, abode, at a distance from mountain scenery; for, to a poetical temperament, we are convinced that constant residence in such scenes were very pernicious, however delightful and inspiring occasional visits are. Mountains, when always in sight, cast a gloom over the spirit; they start questions they cannot satisfy; they irritate, without filling, the soul; they narrow the mind, as well as the view; they bring back exploded childish notions, suspicions, and fears. And then, the people residing amidst them are sometimes in an inverse ratio to their dumb neighbours; they are small, sycophantish, narrow, niggardly, bigoted, and proud, as if, because their hills rose to mountains, they might sink to less than men.

And yet, we have met in the Highlands with true poetic spirits, and cannot, indeed, travel far amid their wilds, without finding the genuine poetic fire—the "perfervidum ingenium Scotorum"—shining in dark eyes, burning in warm hands, and aspiring in lofty foreheads. And now that the sealed book of the land is fairly open, and that education is abroad in its loneliest valleys, and that constant intercourse with other countries is diluting the Highlander's pride—his master foible; and that the refinements of society are checking intemperance—his main vice; and that religion, in a lovelier form, is beginning to cast her rainbow over the gorges of his glens, and to attune his church-going bells to a softer melody, we trust that it will awaken (as the bleating of a hundred flocks upon Ben An rouses the respondent voices of Benvenue) the strains of a mountain poetry worthy of the

> "Land of brown heath and shaggy wood,
> Land of the mountain and the flood."

But we must return to the book before us. Its object is "to give to the Gael, or Highlanders of Scotland, a succinct history of their various clans, with representations of their various tartans, correctly delineated and coloured. The books hitherto issued on the subject have been for the few and the wealthy, not for the community at large. The numberless Highland families, moreover, who have long left the region of their sires, and have disused its language, will find the present publication has been expressly drawn up to merit their acceptation. The backwoodsmen of the far western world may recall, through it, the memory of their fathers; and the Canadian draw thence the means of reassuming the ancestral dress by his distant lakes."

This object has been well fulfilled. Mr Smibert, an ingenious Edinburgh gentleman, well known from his connection with "Chambers's Journal," the "Scotsman," and "Hogg's Instructor," has accomplished his task as ably as any Macdonald or Macpherson in the Highlands could have done. He has not, perhaps, speculated very profoundly upon the character of the Highland tribes, nor painted their scenery with much force, nor shown any great depth or novelty of antiquarian lore; but he has done what was far better for his purpose, collected a most multifarious and interesting mass of anecdote—embodied in his book a great "cantle" of Scottish history—made the clans defile before him with very considerable military skill; and sprinkled everywhere modern allusions and poetical quotations, which make the past blend amicably with the present. It is such a book, in short, as Sir Walter Scott would have read with pleasure, reviewed with gusto, and through what he himself supplied out of his unbounded stores, he would have made the commentary more valuable than the text.

When we first opened this volume, we felt somewhat disappointed in the illustrations. We expected representations of the finer Highland scenes famous in the history of the clans—the grey plain of Culloden, in connection with the Stewarts; Dundee rushing down the Pass of Killiecrankie, opposite the chapter on the Grahams; a view of Findlater, the last resting-place of the Macnabs; and the grim Glencoe, rearing its snowy masses as it did on that fearful morning when there was not "a house but there was one dead." Instead of this, we saw only tartan following tartan, in infinite series, as we have seen them in youth, when the

pibrochs summoned a "gathering of the clans," to renew their ancient sports under the braes of St Fillans, with the lovely Loch Earn on the west, or, as others have seen them, in the rich valley of Braemar, with Ben-y-Boord towering in the north, and dark Lochnagar in the south-east, touching every heart and mingling with every imagination throughout the motley throng. Such were our feelings at first; but as we gazed on at those "coats of many colours"—those painted skins of the primeval tribes, transformed into plaids and philabegs—those fine transcripts of nature's hues, as shining in the rainbow, the withered fern, and the autumn ash and its bright rowan-berry; as we admired the infinite blending of the original colours—here blue the deepest lying amid the glaring yellow and the rich green—there one glow of green striped with silvery streaks of white; here a glare of fiery red bedropped with blue, as with bits of sky—and there (the tartan of the Clan Maclaurin) a perfect sun of colour *prismatised*, with the loveliest blue for the centre, and with green, and yellow, and indigo, and dark grey, and even black (no colour though it be), ranging around it—we began to feel what poetry there may be in the dress of man, as well as in the dress of nature, and that both are children and reflectors of the same sun, and to wonder that no poet has yet adventured any distance upon this delicate and lovely field.

Our interest in contemplating the clan tartans does not altogether arise from the brilliancy of the colours, or from their resemblance to those of nature. Other associations add their artful aid to the effect. We see these tartans dyed in blood as they flutter over many a battle-field. A thousand battles look out from those silent pictures. The plains of Tipper and Sheriff Muirs—the rocky pass of Killiecrankie—the harvest-field of Preston, where the husbandman and Death toiled together—the marsh of Falkirk—the "waefu' muir" of Culloden—the heights of Abraham—the walls of Badajoz—the plains of Waterloo—and the defiles of Affghanistan, all come and pass, as the hand slowly turns over those beautiful delineations. Then fancy sees, or thinks she sees, a correspondence between the colours and the history of the clans. The Royal Clan Stewart has an exceedingly chequered pattern, and one in which the luckless White Rose of York too much predominates. Red and green overpower the blue in the Cameron Plaid, which the brave Donald of Lochiel had to carry over his shoulders to hopeless banishment, and his brother Archibald to the scaffold. The Graham Tartan, worn by Montrose and Dundee, is almost wholly green—a colour often reputed luckless. And do not the deep broad squares of red, forming the larger portion of the Macgregor Tartan, seem a silent prophecy of the fate of that wild but warlike sept, which for centuries was tracked, like a wounded animal, by their blood? "Superstitious," it will be said; but remember we have left, as aforesaid, our incredulity at the Highland line on the south side of the Bridge of Dunkeld, and have a *right* to be as superstitious as we please till we return to resume it.

Mr Smibert, in his notices, traverses a very wide field, over which we have not space or time to follow him. Suffice it to say, that every page teems with facts; that the whole forms one of the best after-dinner books of the season; and that we may point out, as particularly entertaining, the chapters on the Clans Buchanan, Cameron, Macgregor, Comyn, and last, not least, Macnab. The details of the life of Francie Macnab are exceedingly amusing, and as rich as is consistent with modesty. The author might have made his history much more grossly and grotesquely interesting, but has very properly suppressed an account of the old scoundrel's seraglio, which was almost Oriental in numbers, led to immeasurable scandal in that pastoral region, and gave occasion to some of his wittiest, though coarsest jests.

We take leave of Clanship and the Clans with mingled emotions of regret and of pleasure. There was much in this phase of Feudalism to attract the imagination, but far more to repel the

judgment and to grieve the moral sense. The clans were, after all, societies of savages—cruel, bloody, theftuous, cunning, false, and ignorant, although with wild gleams of courage, patriotism, intellect, and virtue. Their chiefs were images of their followers, made on a more colossal scale, but made after their own heart—wolf-dogs amongst curs of low degree and of smaller size. The system, with all its patriarchal features, was a falsehood, because a fixture—conserving something of the past, it ignored all the august possibilities of the future. We have read, therefore, Mr Smibert's very interesting volume with the feelings of one who meets the close of a proud, beautiful, but gloomy and threatening, autumn day, in which thunder-showers and glimpses of sunshine have intermingled, sunny storms swept over half-ripened fields, and prodigious frowning mountains of cloud arisen to pour out hail and tempest. Thus appear to us the castellated mansions and wasting feuds, the iron tempests and the bloody sunshine, of the system of clanship. But it no more exists. The pennons of the festal steam-ship wave now where once waved the plumed bonnets of the Macgregors. The horn of the coach-guard sounds now where once sounded the shrill whistle of the chieftain. Stage-coaches (driven by the railways to the Highlands as to their *dernier ressort*, like the wolves and bears of an elder day) now penetrate the passes where the caterans once poured down their half-naked ranks to seize a prey. Periodicals, newspapers, books, and Bibles, circulate where, not long ago, stories of ghosts, and floating fragments of ancient song, were all the literature. Still we shut Mr Smibert's volume with a feeling of sorrow. Clanship was a rude shelter to many a brave spirit. It did create a certain wild poetry. It did nourish a certain rough devotion and unkempt courage. It was the parent of a music, the pibroch of which still, in distant lands, and heard suddenly in the streets of evening cities, sends rushing through the veins of Scotchmen a strong tide of national feeling. It has left, too, a literature of its own—for to what else are we to trace Macpherson's unequal, but often superb, forgeries; some of Burns's and Campbell's noblest poetry; much of Wilson's finest prose; and the best of the best fictions in the world—need we name the "Waverley," the "Antiquary," the "Rob Roy," and others, of Sir Walter Scott? Let no one, then, tread contemptuously on the grave of Clanship; and no humane spirit will seek to do it.

"Men are we, and must grieve, when e'en the shade
Of aught which once was great has pass'd away."

GEORGE DAWSON.

THE office of an interpreter, if not of the highest order, is certainly very useful, honourable, and, at certain periods, particularly necessary. There are times when the angle at which the highest minds of the age stand to the middle and lower classes is exceedingly awkward and uncertain. Their names and their pretensions are well known; even a glimmer of their doctrine has got abroad; some even of their books are read with a maximum of avidity, and a minimum of understanding; but a fuller reflection of their merits and their views, a further circulation of their spirit, and a more complete discharge of their electric influences, are still needed. For these purposes, unless the men will condescend to interpret themselves, we must have a separate class for the purpose. Indeed, such a class will be created by the circumstances. As each morning we see a grand process of interpretation, when the living light leaps downwards from heaven to the mountain summits, and from these to the low-lying hills, and from these to the deep glens—

each mountain and hill taking up in turn its part in the great translation, till the landscape is one volume of glory — so mind after mind, in succession, and in the order of their intellectual stature, must catch and reflect the empyrean fire of truth.

Chief among the interpreters of our time stands Thomas Carlyle. He has not added any new truth to the world's stock, nor any artistic work to the world's literature, nor is he now likely to do so; but he has stood between the British mind and the great German orbs, and flung down on us their light, with a kind of contemptuous profusion, coloured, too, undoubtedly, by the strange rugged idiosyncrasy on which it has been reflected. This light, however, has fallen short of the middle class, not to speak of the masses of the community. This translation must itself be translated. For some time it might have been advertised in the newspapers—"Wanted, an interpreter for Sartor Resartus." Without the inducement of any such advertisement, but as a volunteer, has Mr George Dawson stepped forward, and has now for several years been plying his profession with much energy and very considerable success.

It were not praise—it were not even flattery—it were simply insult and irony, to speak of Mr Dawson in any other light than as a clever, a very clever translator, or, if he will, interpreter, of a greater translator and interpreter than himself. In all the lectures we have either heard or read of his, every thought and shade of thought was Carlyle's. The matter of the feast was, first course, Carlyle; second, do.; dessert do.; *toujours*, Carlyle: the dishes, dressing, and sauce only were his own. Nor do we at all quarrel with him, for this. Since the public are so highly satisfied, and since Carlyle himself is making no complaint, and instituting no hue and cry, it is all very well. It is really, too, a delightful *hachis* he does cook, full of pepper and spice, and highly palatable to the majority. Our only proper ground of quarrel would be, if he were claiming any independent merit in the thought, apart from the illustrations and the easy vigorous talk of the exhibition. We have again and again been on the point of exclaiming, when compelled to contrast description with reality, we shall henceforth believe nothing till we have seen it with our eyes, and heard it with our ears. The most of the pictures we see drawn of celebrated people seem, after we have met with the originals, to have been painted by the blind. So very many determinedly praise a man for qualities which he has not—if a man is tall, they make him short; if dark, they give him fair hair; if his brow be moderate in dimensions, they call it a great mass of placid marble; if he be an easy, fluent speaker, they dignify him with the name orator; if his eye kindle with the progress of his theme, they tell us that his face gets phosphorescent, and as the face of an angel. Hence the mortifying disappointments which are so common—disappointments produced less by the *inferiority* than by the *unlikeness* of the reality to the description. David Scott, when he visited Coleridge, was chagrined to find his forehead, of which he had read ravings innumerable, of quite an ordinary size. We watched Emerson's face very narrowly, but could not, for our life, perceive any glow mounting up its pale and pensive lines. We had heard much of Dawson's eloquence, but found that while there was much fluency, there was little fire, and no enthusiasm. Distance and dunces together had metamorphosed him, even as a nobler cause of deception sometimes changes, says one, a village steeple into a tower of rubies, and plates a copse with gold.

To call this gentleman a Cockney Carlyle, a transcendental bagman, were to be too severe; to call him a combination of Cobbett and Carlyle, were to be too complimentary. But while there is much in the matter which reminds you of Carlyle, as the reflection reminds you of the reality, there is much in his style and manner which recalls William Cobbett. Could we conceive Cobbett by any possibility forswearing his own nature, converted to Germanism, and proclaiming it in his own way, we should have had

George Dawson anticipated and forestalled. The Saxon style, the homely illustrations, the conversational air, the frequent appeals to common sense, the broad Anglicanisms, and the perfect self-possession, are common to both, with some important differences, indeed; since Dawson is much terser and more pointed —since his humour is dry, not rich—and since he is, as to substance, rather an echo than a native, though rude voice.

To such qualities as we have now indirectly enumerated, we are to attribute the sway he has acquired over popular, and especially over English audiences. They are not, while hearing him, called profoundly either to think or feel. They are not painfully reminded that they have not *read*. Enthusiastic appeal never warms their blood. A noble self-contempt and forgetfulness is never inculcated. Of reverence for the ancient, the past, and the mysterious, there is little or none. They are never excited even to any fervour of destructive zeal. A strong, somewhat rough voice is heard pouring out an even, calm, yet swift torrent of mingled paradoxes and truisms, smart epigrammatic sentences, short, cold, hurrying sarcasms, deliberate vulgarisms of expression, quotations from "Sartor Resartus" and Scripture, and from no other book—never growing and never diminishing in interest—never suggesting an end as near, nor reminding us of a beginning as past—every one eager to listen, but no one sorry when it is done; the purpose of the whole being to shake, we think too much, respect for formulas, creeds, and constituted authorities—to inculcate, we think too strongly, a sense of independence and individualism—and to give to the future, we think, an undue preponderance over the past.

Mr George Dawson has read with considerable care and accuracy the signs of his time. He has watched the direction and the rate of the popular tide, and has cast himself on it with an air of martyrdom. His has been the desperate determination at all hazards to sail with the stream. He sees, what only the blind do not, that a new era is begun, in which, as Napoleon said, "there shall be no Alps," when they threatened to impede his march; our young mind has in like manner sworn there shall be no past, no history, no Bible, no God even, if such things venture to stand across *our* way, and curb *our* principle of progress, and is rushing on heroically with this daring multitude. One is amused at the cry of persecution which he raises *on* his way. The term, to us, in such cases as his, sounds supremely ludicrous. What, in general, does persecution for conscience-sake now mean? It means, if the subject be a clergyman, the trebling of his audience and the doubling of his income; if an author, the tenfold sale of his works; if a man in business, three customers instead of one—not to speak of the pleasures of notoriety, lecturing engagements, gold watches, and pieces of plate. Pleasant and profitable persecution! even when it is diversified by a little newspaper abuse—the powerless hatred of the deserted party—and some strictures in the magazines! What comparison between this species of persecution and the treatment which a Wordsworth or a Shelley received? or what comparison between it and the neglect, contempt, and poverty which now befall many a worthy and conscientious supporter of the *Old?* We knew an elderly neglected clergyman, who came to a brother minister and said, "I wish you would preach against me; it might bring me into notice." Mr Dawson has been preached, placarded, and prayed into notice—a notice in which he has expanded and bourgeoned like a peach-tree in the sunshine, and yet of which he thinks proper to complain as persecution! Pretty exchange! an elegant pulpit for a barrel of burning coals—fifteen hundred admiring auditors for a thousand exulting foes—the "Church" instead of the "Cross" of the Saviour. We really cannot, in this world of wo, find in our hearts one particle of pity to spare for Mr Dawson, nor for any such mellifluous martyrs.

No eagle soaring and screaming in the teeth of the storm — no thunder-cloud moving up the wind, do we deem our hero; but, on the whole, a most compla-

cent and beautiful peacock's feather, sailing adown the breeze, yet with an air as if it had created and could turn it if he chose; or, shall we say? a fine large bubble, descending with dignity, as if it were the cataract; or—shall we try it once more? —a straw, imagining that because it shows the direction, it is directing the wind. If these figures do not give satisfaction, we have fifty more at the service of Mr Dawson's admirers; for, after all, we must blame his admirers and his enemies more than himself. He has much about him that is frank, open, and amiable. A clever young man, endowed with a rare talent for talk, he began to talk in a manner that offended his party. Many, on the other hand, of no party, were struck with surprise at hearing such bold and liberal sentiments uttered from such a quarter. Pure, unmixed Carlylism coming from a Baptist pulpit sounded in their ears sweet and strange. The rest might have been expected. Between the dislike of his foes, the wild enthusiasm of his friends, the ill-calculated pounce of the Archbishop of York, the real, though borrowed, merit of many of his sentiments, and the real native force of his speech—he found himself all at once on a giddy eminence which might have turned stronger heads; for here was the *rarissima avis* of a liberal Baptist—a Carlylistic clergyman, a juvenile sage, and a transcendentalist talking English—there was no bird in all Knowsley Park that could be named in comparison. Here, besides, was positively the first Dawson (except Peel's friend) that had, as an intellectual man, been known beyond his own doorway. Such circumstances, besides a felt want in the public mind, which he professed to supply, account for the rapid rise of one, who had written and done nothing except a few lectures and sermons, to the summit of notoriety.

So far as Dawson is a faithful renderer or doer into English of Thomas Carlyle's sentiments, we have, we repeat, no quarrel with him. But in some points we dislike his mode of expounding and illustrating these, or, if he be in all things an accurate expounder of his principal, why, then, we must just venture to question his principal's infallibility.

Mr Dawson, for instance, sets himself with all his might to inculcate the uselessness of the clergy as teachers of truth, and the superiority of the lecturing class, or prophets, as he modestly calls them. Samuel, he told us, was a much greater personage than the priests of his day. We do not, in all points, "stand up for our order." We are far from thinking that the clergy, as a whole, are awake to the necessities of the age, or fully alive to all its tendencies. We know that Dr Tholuck, when in this country, was grieved at the want of learning he found in some of our greatest men, and especially at their ignorance of the state of matters in Germany. We know that he advised two eminent doctors of different denominations to read Strauss's "Life of Christ;" and that, while one of them declined, in very strong language, the other, Dr Chalmers (how like him!), said, "Well, I will read it, Dr Tholuck; *is't a big book?*" Strauss, of course, he recommended, not from sympathy with its theory, but because it is a book as necessary to be read now by the defenders of Christianity as was Gibbon's "History" fifty years ago.* But, while granting much to Mr Dawson, we are far from granting all. Ministers do not profess to be prophets, except in so far as they are *declarers* of the Divine will, as exhibited in the Scriptures, or as they may be endowed with that deep vision of truth and beauty which is now, by courtesy, called prophetic sight. But who are prophets, pray, in any other sense? Who can now pretend to stand to ministers in the relation to which that Samuel, who had, in his youth, been awakened by the voice of God, and who, in his manhood, had, by his call, aroused the slumbering thunder, and darkened the heavens by the waving of his hand, stood to the priesthood of Israel? Not surely George Dawson, nor yet Thomas Carlyle—no, nor Fichte nor Goethe them-

* We are glad to learn since, that Strauss's mischievous work is *now* as decidedly rejected in Germany as it is in Britain.

selves. Alas! may we not now, all of us, take up the complaint of the Psalmist?—

"Our signs we do not now behold,
There is not us among
A Prophet more, nor any one
That knows the time how long."

It is as it was at the close of Saul's guilty and inglorious reign, when God refused to answer by dreams, by Urim, or by prophets, and when, in defect of the true vision, he went to consult with wizards and *quack salvers*. We are, indeed, rather more favoured—we have still among us wise and gifted men; but, if we would find prophets, in the highest sense of the word, we must just go back and sit at the feet of those awful bards of Israel—those legislators of the future—whose words are full of eyes. As poets, as seers, as teachers, as truthful and earnest men, not to speak merely of their august supernatural pretensions, they still tower alone, unsurmounted and unapproached, the Himalayan mountains of mankind.

It is easy for a popular lecturer, primed and ready with his three or his six polished and laboured efforts, to sneer at the ministers of Jesus. But it is not so easy for one of this now calumniated class to keep up for long years a succession of effective appeals to the conscience and to the heart, in season and out of season—through good report and through bad report. And it is not particularly kind or graceful in a gentleman, who must have experienced the peculiar difficulties of the order to which he still belongs, to turn again and rend them; enjoying, as he does even yet, some of the immunities of the class, it is mean in him to shirk its responsibilities, and meaner still, to try to shake its credit in the estimation of his countrymen.

He draws, to be sure, after Emerson, a distinction between a preacher and a man preaching—a distinction as obvious nearly as that between a fiddling man and a man fiddling, a barking puppy and a puppy barking. He is not a preaching man, but a man preaching. What a miserable quibble! Who means by a preacher anything else than a man who has voluntarily assumed the task of declaring the truth of God to his fellows? Does one necessarily cease to be a man, in becoming a preacher? Or does one necessarily become a man, by ceasing to be, or wishing it to be thought that he has ceased to be, a preacher? Nay, verily. In fact, a considerable share of Mr Dawson's popularity, with a certain class at least, springs from the preacher-air and the preacher-phrases which still cling to his delivery and style. He is little else than a clever lecturer, made out of the elements or ruins of a second-rate preacher.

In Mr Dawson's lectures we find no variety of thought. Two or three ideas, imported into his mind, are rattled like peas over and over into a thousand different sounds or discords. The same terms, too, such as subjective and objective, dynamical and mechanical, are perpetually repeated, with a parrot-like iteration. There is in some minds, and in some styles, a gigantic monotony, as in the ocean surges. But there is also a small mannerism arising from the mimicry of a model—itself, in part, a copy—which can with difficulty be endured for a few nights, and for no more.

Of course, he proclaims warfare against conventionalisms of speech and of thought: to call, in prayer, a woman a handmaiden, the sea the great deep, &c., is with him a grave offence. Words are things. Things ought to be called by their right names. A spade should be a spade: and not, as Dr Johnson might have said, a "broad, semi-wooden, semi-iron instrument, for tearing the bosom of *terra firma*, the pioneer of the advenient seed." Shade of Dr Johnson! then, art thou not provoked to ask, "What, in the name of wonder, George Dawson, art thou? what callest thou thyself? Art thou infidel, pagan, or Christian, or anything more than a man preaching? I know not how to entitle thee positively: but, negatively, depend upon it, *I* shall never call *thee*, by any accident, 'a great deep.'"

Too often in Mr Dawson's prelections, as in some of Emerson's essays, what is new is not true, and what is true is not new. In proclaiming the stern truth that there is something higher than happiness,

namely blessedness, he only repeated the finest sentence in "Sartor Resartus." But who instructed him for once to go beyond his master, and to ridicule the phrase, "luxury of doing good?" Although duty can play its high part at times without public fee or reward, has it not always, in its own exercise, "a joy beyond the name of pleasure?" Does not Scripture often appeal to the desire and to the prospect of happiness as stimulants to duty? Has not the Divine Being annexed even to sacrifice and to martyrdom a feeling which we may appropriately term "luxury," if luxury mean something at once delicious and rare? "To be good for good's sake," is the noblest reach of man; but what does good imply in its very conception? Surely some severe but real delight, partly in present feeling, and partly in future prospect. We know right well the tendency of Mr Dawson's sneer—it is an attempt to scoff out the golden candlestick of celestial blessedness, as the reward of the good; although as well might he seek to puff away to-morrow's sun.

We notice, in connection with all his allusions to religion, a want of moral reverence for the subject. Suppose it were true, what he so often intimates, that God has abandoned our present forms of worship, in what spirit should he tread the deserted shrine? In what spirit did (we beg pardon for the reference) the Son of Man walk in the desecrated and doomed Temple of Jerusalem? It was not, certainly, with contemptuous disregard, any more than with the cry on his lips, "Raze, raze it to its foundation!" It was, doubtless, with tears in his eyes, as he remembered, "Here God once dwelt." With what coolness, with what propensity to sneer, with what ill-suppressed joy, at these long desolations, do some now walk through what they call a ruin, as forsaken as the temple of Jupiter Palatinus! Shame to thee, George Dawson, if this be thy feeling, as we fear it is!

Mr Dawson's *forte* lies, unquestionably, in his lively and amusing illustrations. His is a species of proverbial philosophy. He abounds both in "old saws and modern instances." He accommodates the results of philosophy to every-day life, and translates its technicalities into the loose conversation, almost into the slang, of every-day language. It may be questioned whether in this he does men much service; for, in the first place, in such a process a great deal that is most valuable necessarily escapes. There are thoughts in every high philosophy which will not bear translation into ordinary speech. Our English vernacular will only look ludicrous as it attempts to girth their greatness; and these thoughts are, of course, the deepest and noblest. Secondly, apart from this aboriginal difficulty, the translator, when also a popular lecturer, is under strong temptation to dilute what truth he does tell too much, and to give his babes, instead of milk, milk and water. And, thirdly, those babes will be exceedingly apt to fancy, after a few such diluted preparations, that they have suddenly shot up into men of full age. In the short space of four or five amusing hours, they are quite qualified to chatter Carlylese, to dogmatise on the characteristics and tendencies of the age, and to look with sovereign contempt on ministers, and on all who are weak enough to put their trust in them. We met, some time ago, in a London omnibus, a good-natured, amusing old lady, at whom we inquired if she had ever been in Edinburgh. She answered, "No; but I saw a *panoramar* of it, which gave me a very good *hidear* of it." Such a satisfactory panoramaric *hidear* does Mr Dawson give his auditors of the German philosophy, and of Plato.

When I hear such a preacher, said one, I go home well pleased with him; when I hear such another, I go home ill pleased with myself. Mr Dawson sends home most of his audience well pleased with him and with themselves, and thinking more of him and of themselves than of his theme. They carry away no stings with them—none of that fine humility, of that divine despair, which contemplation of nature's vastness and of man's littleness inevitably produces, and yet which never fails afterwards to excite genuine aspiration. The masterly ease, self-possession, clearness, in-

terest, and fluency of Mr Dawson's talk, give you an hour's, or perchance a night's pleasure, and that is all; for, indeed, he is rather a talker than a teacher. To those who have read Carlyle's "Miscellanies," and other works, he tells nothing new; and those who have not, are in general more amused by the novel and vivid illustrations, than impressed and subdued by what to them ought to be the startling truths. The enthusiast alone can teach, because he alone can feel up to that point where feeling overflows, burning and sometimes scalding into other minds. Mr Dawson may be, we trust is, at heart a sincere man, but he is not an enthusiast; he has no self-forgetfulness, no rapt emotion of any kind; he manages his instrument but too dexterously and too consciously well. We have no conception what he can have made of Switzerland —what shape its rocks, torrents, and glaciers have assumed in his mind—what *gingerbread cast* of the Alps he has contrived to form, or how his essentially cold and clever style has managed to rise to cope with the magnificent field. Were there any barn-fowl flutterings, any ghastly contortions of imaginative penury and weakness? or did he, as we rather suspect, with his wonted tact, avoid the grander features of his subject, and turn aside into paths equally pleasing, less hackneyed, and for him less dangerous? Let our Glasgow friends who heard him on this subject answer the question. Altogether, Mr Dawson's mission seems to us exceedingly uncertain, both as to its purpose and its probable results. We do not see any distinct reason or call why he should have separated himself to that gospel of negations which he preaches. We have asked him already what is he; we ask him now what he wishes us to be. A man who has started from the ranks, who has done so as if in obedience to a voice, "come out, and be thou separate," ought to be able to tell with some explicitness what he would give us in exchange for what we are in effect required to resign. But "story," like the knife-grinder, "he has none to tell, sir." He offers, it is true, relief to doubters—nay, builds a chapel for them, and calls it by the *unpretending* name, the "Church of the Saviour;" but, in truth, his teaching only adds fire to fever, and seems to us a masterly machinery for creating or confirming doubt. We grant him readily that doubters—the most interesting and one of the most numerous of classes of men in the present day, including, not now as formerly, merely the vain and the vicious, but many of the sincere, the intelligent, the virtuous, and the humble —including, especially, so many of the young and rising spirits of the time—are not sufficiently attended to in the daily ministrations. Their feelings are not respected, their questions are not fairly answered, their motives and characters are misrepresented, their doubts are flung back unresolved contemptuously in their face; and hence many of them are carrying their questions to other oracles, and getting their Gordian knots cut by other swords, than that of the Spirit.

But let those who have done, repair the injury. Let the various churches of the country set to work with greater zeal, with greater unanimity, and, above all, with greater intelligence and greater charity, to attend to this most important and neglected class. Let them demonstrate that the charges against Christianity as dead are untrue, by showing that its ancient spirit is still alive. Dr Chalmers, from that lofty watch-tower which he occupied, and round which, alas! the shades of evening were gathering fast, saw the bulking danger of the Church— and it was his all but last act to set the trumpet to his mouth, and blow an alarm to the Christian world. Would it had been more widely echoed and obeyed! A tender, general, and enlightened attention to the doubting Thomases of the day, would produce numerous good consequences. It would show religion in her most amiable aspect—having compassion upon the ignorant, and upon those that are out of the way. It would arrest the doubts of many, ere they were hardened into a fierce and aggressive infidelity. It would change every church into a refuge for those who are tossed with tempest,

and not comforted—a true "Church of the Saviour;" and it would proclaim to those officious "flatterers," who would rid men of their burdens elsewhere than at the Cross and the Sepulchre, that their occupation was gone. We are not, however, at all sanguine of such results as near. Our wretched divisions and partyisms—the bigoted battle we are still disposed to do for the smallest minutiæ of our different creeds, while its main pillars are so powerfully assailed—our general deadness and coldness, seem to augur that some mighty regenerating process is needed by all churches, ere they can fully meet wants which are yearly becoming more and more imperious. "Good religious people," writes to us one of the most eminent evangelical ministers in a sister country, "have a great deal to learn, and some of them will never learn anything. They are unconscious of the new world in which they live. They do not know what a different thing the pulpit is, and how different the preacher ought to be, since the new and mighty preacher in the form of the Press has risen up, and occupied so much of the preacher's old ground. The Press and the Pulpit might and ought to understand each other better than they do." Coinciding in such views, we do not, however, expect that Mr Dawson's pulpit will do much to promote the reconciliation of those two rival powers. He is verily not a preacher, but a man preaching magazine articles, sprinkled with Scripture texts. He belongs to an amphibious order of beings, neither in nor out of the church. We cannot conceive himself long to remain at ease in such an ambiguous position, nor that the public can continue to place much confidence in him as a clergyman. We are not afraid that he will ever be totally overlooked. He is young, ready, fluent, ambitious, with much power of mental assimilation, a fertile, teeming brain, and a tongue and pair of lungs perfectly first-rate. Such qualities in bustling times can never fail of their reward, although we should imagine that the lecture-room, instead of the chapel, will by and by become the favourite field for their exhibition.

We venture to conclude this from the perusal of his sermon—the opening one of his new chapel—entitled, the "Demands of the Age upon the Church." If this be an average specimen of Mr Dawson's writing or preaching powers, we must warn the public that they are not to expect him to become a Hall in the pulpit, or a Foster at the desk. As a composition, it is loose, careless, even vulgar. Think of an expression like this occurring in a discourse on such a solemn occasion—"*we do not unite on the sly.*" The style is an odd compound of Carlylisms and Pickwickisms. The bond of union it proposes is no bond at all. A union of common doubts and disbeliefs may form a vast moral infirmary, but not a church. We forewarn him, that it is difficult now, as of old, to make bricks without straw, and build a house without cement. That the doubters deserve special tending, he proves satisfactorily. He does not prove the adaptation of his chapel to their case. The spirit of Christianity he would divorce from its eternal principles and facts—an attempt as hopeless as to separate the life of a tree from its leaves, branches, and trunk. The only part of the discourse at all valuable is its statement of the admitted fact, that vital religion is at a low ebb; but even this he exaggerates, and his notion that it has passed over to the free-thinkers, is simply not true. We have only to read this sermon to be convinced, that, although his church be called the Church of the Saviour, he is not destined to be the saviour of the Church.

We know full well that such a frank expression of our sentiments will create against us a number of opponents. We are perfectly indifferent. Whenever the trigger of the gun Truth is drawn, by however feeble a hand, and a report follows, multitudes of timorous or stupid creatures are sure to rise up alarmed or enraged, and to rend the air with their screams. It will be said that we are actuated by some *animus* against Mr Dawson. We must simply disown any such feeling. We gave Mr Dawson constant attendance and earnest attention. We were occasionally delighted, and testified

it by no feeble or niggardly applause. We saw much about him in private that was pleasing. But a sense of duty, compled, we grant, with a certain feeling of indignation at the undue prominence which is partly given him, and which in part he assumes, and to which no man possessed merely of mechanical gifts, however extraordinary, is entitled, have urged us to write as we have written. "It is intolerable," said one, "to think of the literary coteries of London being overcrowed in the accent of an Ecclefechan carter." This may be, and ought to be borne, if that accent stirs and inflames under the words of genius. But it is intolerable, that a glib and flowing tongue, conveying borrowed sentiments in the language of the Pickwick papers, should be listened to as if behind it were flashing the eye of a Burns, or towering the brow of a Shakspere. And it is still more intolerable that a man without depth, learning, originality, or enthusiasm, should be swaying opinion, or shaking the faith of any in the great inspirations of the past.

If Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel are to be blotted out, let the blank be filled up with names of a somewhat higher calibre —and mighty to start a nobler spirit— than that of George Dawson.

Our faith in popular lecturing has never been great, and has been lessened by the experiences of several past winters. In the course of them, we have heard five or six of the most distinguished of the class, and have not only listened carefully to them, but have watched the effects of their prelections on their audiences. So far as the lecturers are concerned, our expectations have been exceeded rather than the reverse. All, in different styles, were excellent. All, through very different avenues, found their way to the attention and to the applause of their hearers. One, by a rich anecdotage, and the clear and copious detail of facts, nailed the ears of his audience to his lips. Another gathered them around him, talking though he was in an unknown tongue, through the cloudy grandeur of his speculation. Another took them captive by the enthusiasm which shone in his face and quivered on his lips. Another passed across them like a rapid snow-drift, showering on their passive spirits a thick succession of clear, cold sentences. All exerted power; all gave a certain amount of pleasure. Did any much more? Was any permanent elevation given or lasting effect produced? Had Scotland, England, and America been ransacked for their ablest spirits, only to produce a certain tickling gratification, at most amounting to a high intellectual treat? We do not wish to speak dogmatically on the point, but it is our distinct impression that, in a spiritual, not in a pecuniary sense, the cost outwent the profit. The great ends of teaching were not, and in the space, and in the circumstances, could hardly have been, answered. Multitudes, unprepared by previous reading and training, were brought out by curiosity, or in some cases by a better principle, to hear some of the first men of the age; listened with most exemplary attention; were thrilled or tickled, but we fear not *fed*. We are convinced that steady attendance upon one plain single month's course on geology or modern history, would have done more good than whole years spent in hearing such brilliant birds of passage.

PROFESSOR SPALDING.*

In several former papers we were up among the *Dii majorum gentium* of criticism — the Hazlitts, Deltas, Wilsons, Coleridges, and Jeffreys. We are now about to descend to the analysis of a much smaller critic, premising that our

* "The History of English Literature. By W. Spalding, A.M., Professor of Logic and Rhetoric at St Andrews." London: Simpkin & Marshall.

principal reason for speaking of him at all is, that his little work seems to us typical of rather a large and somewhat shallow class of critical productions, whose popularity at present is disgraceful to the age. We may premise also that our motives in the following paper must be considered disinterested, since the professor is a gentleman whom we know not, never saw, and seldom heard of till he published his volume.

The volume before us has been much and widely praised by the press, and yet we intend to prove that it contains more specimens of weak and worthless criticism than any book of the same compass in recent critical literature, Hallam not excepted. Indeed, Professor Spalding reminds us very much of that greatly overrated man. A similar quantity of learning; the same calmness of tone; the same judicial air; the same barrenness of imagination; the same want of *curiosa felicitas* in expression; the same inevitable necessity of *missing* the character of the authors criticised; the same chastity and coldness, but not the same correctness of style; the same deficiency in wide and deep critical sympathies—are apparent in both. And yet these are the idols of a considerable class of minor writers, who have all the faults of Hallam and Spalding, without their merits. We proceed to substantiate our assertion by a few specimens of our St Andrews style of critical discussion and verdict. In his remarks on Shakspere, Mr Spalding has set out apparently with the intention of saying nothing new or good upon the subject, and has admirably fulfilled his intention. He calls "Timon of Athens" a "singular piece," and adduces "Troilus and Cressida" as a proof of the gloom which rested on Shakspere's mind in his latter years! "Othello," not "Lear" or "Macbeth," is "the sternest and gloomiest of all his dramas." And yet, at the time when he wrote it, his power of conceiving and representing passion was "less intense." What palpable contradiction have we here! In his remarks on Spenser, we find the following startling and novel statement: "His magnificent poem is called the 'Fairy Queen.'" He tells us, too, that that poem is distinguished by the interest of its adventures—a mere paradox, which we wonder Macaulay had not taught him to be ashamed of. Herbert he treats coldly, as distinguished chiefly by "oddest peculiarities," and thinks he compliments when he compares him to Keble. Surely such a critic deserves to be driven out of the "Temple" with a whip of small cords. Herbert has indeed "presented the belief and offices of the Church of England in their most amiable aspect;" but he has done far more, and has, in parts, reached a depth of thought which Quarles, Crashaw, Donne, or Cowley, have never neared. The enthusiastic appreciation denied to the "holy Herbert" is reserved for the amorous Herrick. A criticism on Milton follows, exceedingly poor and commonplace, filled with the old stories about his imitation of other poets, his poetry being consecrated to holiness and virtue, &c. We do not think the expression, "the prodigal variety of his imagination," to be very characteristic or happy. Milton's imagination was neither prodigal nor varied; it was a severe, condensed energy, not teeming like that of Shakspere or Jeremy Taylor—dealing, indeed, much in figures; but dealing far more in forms, thoughts, and sentiments. "The 'Paradise Regained' is wearisome," and its plan "poorly conceived;" and yet he grants that it has passages which, in one way or another, are beautiful. What a kind and gracious concession! Are there no passages in that exquisite poem, such as the visions from the mountain, the storm in the wilderness, and the account of the dreams of Christ, which spurn the word "beautiful," and aspire to the measure and stature of the sublime? "Samson Agonistes" is neither "impassioned," nor "strong in character," nor "poetical in its lyrical parts." No sentence could contain more falsehood in the same compass. What! is there no "passion" in Samson's complaints over his blindness —none in his vehement accusations of Delilah—none in his fierce rejoinders to Harapha? Are Samson, Delilah, and

Harapha weak characters? And who that remembers the sublime burst of lyrical wo, "O dark, dark, dark!" or the comparison of the Phœnix, "the secular bird of ages," will deny that there is poetry in its "lyrical parts!" We advise all readers of Spalding, as a general rule, to apply the principle of contraries to his critical statements, and thus get at the truth. Of the "Paradise Lost" he says nothing but what had been said far better before. It is too late in the day to speak of the organ-peal of his versification, and the melancholy grandeur of his angelic natures.

Howe he next attempts to "damn with faint praise." It seems that his diction has no "fine felicities of genius." Indeed! Has Mr Spalding ever read Howe? If so, does he never remember him rising above "the old force of eloquent persuasiveness?" Has he ever seen his "Vanity of Man as Mortal," his "Blessedness of the Righteous," or his "Living Temple?" Are there no fine felicities of genius in them? We venture to compare his picture of the judgment, in the first of these; his fine raptures on the glory of heaven, in the second; and his description of man's soul as a temple in ruins, in the third—for dignity, eloquence, richness of expression, and "fine felicity of genius," to anything in the English tongue; and we are so far from being singular in this opinion, that we never saw it questioned, till we read the above impertinence of the professor. To Owen, too, he by no means does full justice. He says, "to the praise of eloquence he has no claim whatever." Mr Spalding has certainly never read his "Meditations on the Glory of Christ," nor his sermon preached before the Long Parliament, entitled "Heaven and Earth Shaken;" both of which contain eloquence of a grave, severe, majestic sort, bearing the relation to that of Howe which statuary bears to painting. It is less generally known, that some of Owen's controversial works, particularly those directed against the Papists, are full of a dry sarcasm, which cuts the more deeply that it cuts calmly. Bunyan is next characterised with considerable accuracy, if with little enthusiasm, and fares better, certainly, in our professor's hands, than he did some time ago in the contemptuous and contemptible tone of the "Times" (see its pitiful snarl at the immortal tinker, in its article on Miss Cuñninghame), or in the insolent patronage of Mr George Dawson, who not long ago lectured in Glasgow, on a subject of which he knows little more than did his friend Madame von Beck.

We find at page 299 one of the few figures in which Mr Spalding indulges. Speaking of the age of Charles II., he says, "Milton still walked on his solitary course, like one who had lost his way, a benighted traveller on a dreary road." This seems to us anything but a "fine felicity of genius." The "benighted traveller," as referring to his blindness, may pass; but so far was the road he traversed from being solitary, as the description implies, it was surrounded by the riot of the sons of Belial, "flown with insolence and wine." A better image were that of a blind giant walking through some Sodom-city, often insulted, sometimes left to stumble on unmolested, always compelled to listen to sounds of dissonant revel, and yet unwearicdly and undauntedly groping on his way. We extract the account of Butler, as a specimen of the cold, stiff, commonplace style in which our author expresses even his correct judgments:—"Butler's 'Hudibras' is a work of genius, and a remarkable phenomenon in the history of our literature. His pungent wit; his extraordinary ingenuity in drawing whim and jest out of the driest stores of learning; his singular command of apt and sterling words—these are rare endowments. But his, though shedding many beautiful gleams of fancy, is no poetic vein that yields jewels of the first lustre. We read Butler to be amused, and not seldom we are instructed also, and made to think curiously, (!) if not also to profit. But such poets can never hold more than a low step (!) in the path which leads us upwards towards the ethereal regions of imagination; and the time must be a poor one, which yields no brighter fruits than those we gather from

such writings." Certainly our time were a poor one, did it yield no better criticism than is conveyed in such dull and limping language as the above. His remarks on Dryden, which follow, are equally heavy in expression, and somewhat depreciatory withal. Be it that Dryden has left no regular and great poems; a thousand passages in all his works, besides such fine minor effusions as "Alexander's Feast," "Ode on the Death of Mrs Killigrew," and the "Lines to Godfrey Kneller," prove him to have been potentially a great poet. To make up his lack of service, Mr Spalding quotes Scott's splendid panegyric on Dryden, and thus gives his readers an opportunity of contrasting the writing of a real master in the art, with his own meagre, cold-blooded, and half-animated manner. Few critics of his order would have risked such an experiment.

What he says about the writers of the age of Queen Anne is on the whole accurate, and is luminously, although rather feebly, expressed. But what does he mean by the following?—"Swift's worst coarseness of matter hardly ever betrays him into offensive coarseness of expression." Has he never read the "Tale of a Tub," or that recondite work, "Gulliver's Travels," not to speak of the "Miscellanies in Verse?" Indeed, Swift's style is such a mere medium to his substance, that coarseness in the one is transferred unavoidably and entire to the other. Surely Mr Spalding has forgotten how many words in Swift require to be represented by only *their first and last letters*. He is wrong, too, in ascribing "natural coldness" to Addison: natural timidity and reserve he had; but cold in heart or in genius he was not. His praise of, Sir Richard Blackmore, at this time of day, is far too high, and should rather be considered affected or absurd, than generous. To the general strain of these critical lucubrations we are glad, however, to proclaim an exception in the criticism on Pope. Mr Spalding, who has found nothing excellent to say of Shakspere or Milton, has given a really good account of the bard of Twickenham—copied, indeed, in matter substantially from Hazlitt, but very clearly and elegantly translated into "Hallamese."

In the next section he assures us that devout spirit and doctrinal accuracy have preserved the works of Matthew Henry. That this very popular writer possessed these qualities, is certain; but these were *not* the qualities that have preserved his writings. Many a child, and certainly every orthodox clergyman in Britain (especially those who live by the habitual use of his Commentary), know that Henry's writings are salted for posterity chiefly through their quaint and ingenious reflections—through what the Scotch call their "knackiness." Learning, in the strict sense, eloquence, criticism, profound thought, they have none; but they are rich in a certain mother-wit, unconscious humour, and clear pithy sense, which keep the reader continually awake, and often let in the most important instruction through the pleasant medium of a quiet, sly smile. You at once admire, love, and laugh at, or with, your teacher. Mr Spalding speaks, of course, of the "practical good sense and circumstantial plainness" of the author of "Robinson Crusoe;" but baffles our comprehension by the phrase applied to him, "unostentatious aptness of invention;" and excites our ire when he talks of his "*constant* selection of vicious characters and lawless adventures for his descriptions"—forgetting that the author of "Colonel Jack" and the "Memoirs of a Cavalier," is also the author of "Religious Courtship," "Robinson Crusoe," and the preface to "Drelincourt on Death."

In chapter 11 occur a considerable number of similar mistakes or misjudgments. Of the great Warburton he finds nothing better to say, than that he is arrogant and pugnacious. This he was; but surely he was something more. We advise our readers to consult, in addition to his larger works, his familiar letters; and we are much deceived if they are not brought—lashed on, it may be—to a very lofty estimate of the power, the originality, and the boundless resources of his intellect. From him comes, to take one

instance only, that remarkable expression of Robert Hall's—"a forsaken and a fatherless world." Warburton, in short, like Burke, was a parent-mind; a great Father of waters, whose mighty current, ploughing solitary forests, dividing empires, and mirroring Andes, has also fed many a petty pump and many a formal canal, which have not willingly owned the obligation. Somewhere about the year 1820, a powerful paper, written in a style very different from our finical professor's, entitled, "Warburton and Johnson," appeared in "Blackwood's Magazine;" and to it we refer our readers for a full, discriminating, and excessively eloquent view of the character—moral, intellectual, and theological—of the sturdy bishop. We would give a considerable sum to know the name of the author of that brilliant article, and to know why he has written no more.

In the next page he says, that "there is much literary merit in the writings of the gently-pious Watts; and still more in those of the fervidly-devout Doddridge." The reverse, as usual, is true. Doddridge's works, with all their fervour and devotion, scarcely pretend to literary merit. His principal production, the "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul," shall soon only be remembered from the fact that John Foster wrote a noble preface to it; whereas Watts, in his "World to Come," and elsewhere, does aspire to eloquence, and with considerable success. Three paragraphs farther down we meet with this astounding expression—"the religious infidelity of David Hume." Of course Mr Spalding means his infidelity in religious matters; but why has he not said so? Scarcely less clumsy is the following sentence about Benjamin Franklin: "His literary activity belongs (!) chiefly to the period which we are now surveying."

Next comes a somewhat sententious, but on the whole infelicitous and unfair account of Samuel Johnson. Although all previous critics had said the reverse, Mr Spalding opines that Johnson's language is unquestionably superior to his matter. And yet, in another place, he speaks of Boswell's Life as the fairest index of Johnson's ability—a Life where, be it observed, we have the thought without the drapery of splendid language. Sometimes, however, he admits that his "feelings are so highly wrought, as to *kindle* his sluggish imagination into the intensely smouldering heat which it often *assumes*." But he was never "able to bring to ripeness in his mind any coherent system of opinions." Are the Thirty-nine Articles a coherent system? If they are, then so was Johnson's, for that was his creed. And if his belief was not coherent, whose since has been? If Johnson's creed be vague, what, pray, is that of Thomas Carlyle, or Thomas Macaulay? Of course his dictionary is sneered at, and that noble poem, the "Vanity of Human Wishes," is chillingly praised. We wish that, as we have Spalding on Johnson, we could possibly have Johnson on Spalding. "Well, doctor, have you read Professor Spalding's 'History of English Literature?'"—"Yes, sir, and I thought, as I read, of a minnow writing a history of the ocean; or of a mouse in St Peter's giving its estimate of the mighty dome, and the mightier soul of its architect. Sir, the man who can prefer Macaulay to 'Mund Burke, and talk about (ho! ho! ho!) Burke's unwise profusion of ideas, is only fit to have been a professor in one of the universities of Lilliput—or, sir (and than *this* there is nothing lower), to have been the biographer of Bozzy, sir."

About Young's "Night Thoughts" we have such beautifully-balanced contradictions as the following:—"It is eloquent rather than poetical;" and yet "it deals in a fit spirit with the most sublime of all themes" (as if Night could be dealt with fitly except in a poetical way); and yet "it has less of force of imagination than Blair's 'Grave.'" How can a cool, logical mind like Spalding's thus not only contradict itself, but charge superlative on superlative, till the reader is bewildered? Young treats the grandest of all subjects fitly; but Blair comes after, and is grander still! Mark, too, the following figure:—"In this poem (the 'Grave') we note the return of Scotland to the literary

arena into which she had for a long time sent no champions of great prowess." It is quite clear that Mr Spalding meant to say that Scotland had come herself as a champion into the arena before, and after a long absence had returned; but, instead of saying this, he bungles the metaphor, and makes her now a champion, and now the sender of champions in her stead. Our worthy but unimaginative professor can no more manage an image than Lord Lauderdale (according to Sheridan) could mouth a joke. Jokes with the one ceased to be laughing matters; with the other, grave and high-soaring figures create nothing BUT laughter.

The best thing in all this volume is the criticism on Collins. "It is truly conceived, touchingly toned, elegantly worded, and makes you cry out, *O si sic omnia!* The two following clauses are even beautiful:—"We close his tiny volume with the same disappointed surprise which overcomes us when a harmonious piece of music suddenly ceases, unfinished."* "His tenderness makes some of his verses sound like *gentle weeping*."

Felicitous, too, on the whole, are his accounts of the great historians—Hume, Robertson, and Gibbon. He describes well the uniform buskined tread of the last mentioned, but fails to note the sudden stamps of power which form occasionally pauses in his march—the striking single sentences which at once break and beautify the narrative; as where he says of Tamerlane, "He pitched *his* last tent at Otrar, where he was expected by the Angel of Death;" and also omits to condemn the vein of ugly, satyr-like obscenity which runs through the whole of Gibbon's narrative, parallel to that stream of sneer against the blessed faith of Jesus, which Spalding scarcely treats as it deserves.

Of Henry Mackenzie he says, that "his venerable old age *carried* him, (!) like a patriarch surviving the flood, through the first generation of the nineteenth century." To Mrs Radcliffe he ascribes only "melodramatic horrors"—a judgment partially true, but, like most of his verdicts, spoiled by omitting the *per contra*. The "Romance of the Forest" has something else than "melodramatic horrors." It has some of the finest descriptions, and some of the most thrilling dramatic situations and crises, to be found in fictitious literature. Witness the opening carriage-scene—the delightful pictures of forest scenery—the interview in the ruin between La Motte and the marquis—and the escape of the two lovers.

Mr Spalding has the sense to see the superiority of Burke to Pitt, Fox, and Sheridan; but does not characterise him very happily, when he calls him the "most rotund of orators"—an epithet which might fit an ox or a Lambert, but scarcely Edmund Burke, whose style, too, was anything but rotund. But he "derived an extraordinary power of eloquence from that concrete and imaginative character which belonged distinctively to his manner of thought." This is poor enough; but not quite so bad as his preference, hinted at a little before, of Macaulay to Burke, because he has not the same "unwise profusion of ideas." As well speak of Rothschild's unwise profusion of guineas. How can any writer have too much thought? Let Mr Spalding depend on it, that this is a fault that few of his readers will charge on *him*. Can God be ever too rich in suns? As if, too, ideas, like words, were a matter for selection or modification! Words are wind; but ideas are realities—and of realities there never can be too many.

We surrender Cœlebs to his critical vengeance; but are less disposed to coincide with his verdict on Hannah More's miscellaneous works, as of "no great literary merit." Her book on St Paul at least must be marked as an exception. And Milner's "Church History"—that part of it especially written by Isaac—is not the despicable production he would intimate. Wilberforce's "Practical View," if not possessing or aspiring to "great literary merit," has seldom been surpassed for practical power. How many a Felix has it made to tremble; how many an

* Yet perhaps this was suggested by Longfellow's line about Evangeline:—
"When she had pass'd, it seem'd like the ceasing of exquisite music.'

Agrippa to cry out, "Not almost, but altogether, thou persuadest me to be a Christian." "This is true fame."

We are next astounded by the following statement:—"The short career of the unhappy Chatterton held out wonderful promise, both of genius, and of the *employment of it in a proper sphere.*" What CAN this mean? Does Mr Spalding wish us to understand that Chatterton was in his proper sphere when vending forgeries and telling lies? Or even that he was in his proper and worthy sphere while imitating black-letter, instead of producing original poetry? Or what else? We pause for a reply, and, till it comes, feel justified in treating this clause as absolute nonsense.

We have only room to pick out a few of the thick-swarming blunders of the chapters on our era. Campbell's mind is "deficient in manly vigour of thought." Hear that, ye readers of the "Battle of the Baltic," "Lines written on a Scene in Bavaria," the "Last Man," and the "Mariners of England"—four of our manliest, most vigorous poems of modern days. Campbell has "no manly vigour of thought!" Southey (the author of the "Curse of Kehama" and "Thalaba") is an "artificial canal." Byron (the poet of "Childe Harold," "Manfred," and "Cain") "is the poet of active life;" but "*fixes* his suggestive pictures with an extraordinary impressiveness." The "Lady of the Lake" has a good deal of vagueness (!) both in character and narrative." Coleridge's life "ebbed away in the dangerous *happiness* of contemplating undertakings still to be achieved." What absurdity this is, will be felt by every one who remembers Coleridge's own bursts of impassioned sorrow over his unexecuted projects, and who knows that, next to opium, this was the curse that most clung to him through all his life. He became a mere monument of blasted and mutilated might. And this, forsooth, was a case of "dangerous happiness!" Wordsworth's sonnets have a "perfection hardly to be *surpassed.*" We did not know before that there were degrees in perfection. Pollok possessed "very imperfect cultivation," although he had been a most diligent student in Glasgow College, and received the degree of A.M. with honours. About Miss Edgeworth we find the following equivocal complimentary sentence:—"She showed how novel readers may be at once interested and instructed by acute and humorous common sense, not only unalloyed by tinsel sentimentality, but little warmed with lofty feeling of any kind." "'Ivanhoe' is feeble in comic scenes." Indeed! We wish Friar Tuck could have a stroke at our professor's thick skull with his quarter-staff. Our cautious *dominie* (for really he does not deserve any longer the name professor, after this last enormity of nonsense) continues:—"Wilson, in his 'Lights and Shadows,' has not free scope for those powers of sarcasm and humour which we are not forbidden (!) to believe he has elsewhere proved." (!!) Sidney Smith "made the driest discussions" (he means, we suppose, discussions on the driest subjects) "diverting." We wish we could quote his singularly helpless and heavy pictures of the leading reviews and magazines in the beginning of the century. Jeffrey is his idol; and peculiarly gross and fetid is the incense paid at his shrine. His criticisms have one fulsome and feeble page devoted to their praise: while those of Coleridge are characterised in a sentence or two of this description—"Obscure, vacillating, and sometimes capricious, he yet sowed the seeds of a kind of philosophical criticism, which will never perhaps be cultivated very successfully in this cold clime." Let Mr Spalding speak for himself. One would think from this statement that Britain was at the North Pole, and Germany under the Line. We venture to contradict him, and to prophesy that by and by criticism founded on the model of Coleridge, and which, although inferior in subtlety and free from paradox, shall be equally warm, profoundly sympathetic and genial, shall alone be cultivated and valued even in our boreal clime, where snow almost always falls in the dog-days, and John Frost usually dances a jig with the "leafy" month of June, and icicles hang on the

heard of August, as the old fellow is cutting down the first sheaves of his yellow corn!

Foster's style is not "peculiar" (!) nay, it is "easy." (!!!) We see the old grim Baptist grinning horribly a ghastly smile over this remark, and grunting out, "What a fool this fellow must be! Had he called my style Ciceronian or Johnsonian, each epithet would have been false, but not so ridiculously untrue as this word 'easy.' If to read it be a joke to him, to write it has verily been no joke to me. To call my 'Essay on Popular Ignorance' easy! If my style be easy, what must Addison's be! Begone!" (Throws the "History" into the corner of his garret, which is full of chips and shavings for lighting his fire, and resumes the writing of a sentence already three pages long, which seems as far as ever from its termination, and on which he has been occupied for two days.)

Chalmers is complimented for the "congenial keenness with which he perceived truths previously undetected:" a most unfortunate assertion; for Chalmers's great and acknowledged defect is just this, that he has little originality of thought. Chalmers did an immense deal to impress the discoveries of Newton, the moralities of Butler, the method of Bacon, and Paley's principles of evidence, upon the young and the popular mind, but has left no discovery or original train of his own. Hence his works, as a whole, are felt already to be doomed to oblivion; and their vast circulation at present, as in the case of Dr Cumming's far inferior productions, is itself a proof and pledge of their approaching and inevitable fate. The man himself was "our epistle;" and neither he nor his great prototype, John Knox, although both were "reformers of a kingdom," have left anything behind them which the world shall refuse to let die.

Dr Thomas Brown's writings are "neither vigorous nor very pure in taste." This is not only incorrect, but contemptibly incorrect. Brown is often a diffuse writer, it is granted; but his defects in taste have never yet been pointed out, nor was he ever charged with tastelessness before; and as to vigour, not only do his lectures swarm with the most vigorous and striking descriptions of nature, of passion, of mental and moral phenomena, but his "Essay on Cause and Effect," whatever may be thought of its theory, is as admirable a piece of philosophic composition as is extant. His "lectures carry on the reader easily." A curious notion of ease Mr Spalding must have. Foster and Brown easy writers! Brown's lectures, we assure our readers, are not such namby-pamby affairs as this would lead them to suppose. You cannot read them as you do Dickens. More than even Foster does he compel you to think: his style has a linked concatenation in it; and if you drop the smallest link, you entirely lose him. That great popularity which Spalding sneeringly charges against his writings has been produced, not by the ease of reading him, still less by his matchless subtlety, but by his thick and graceful quotations from the poets—by his uniform good taste—by the quantity of information he gives, and by the brilliant eloquence which glows out in every page, particularly toward the end of his course. We can say for ourselves at least, that we never undertook a more profitable course of reading, both for instruction and delight, than when, some years ago, we employed regularly one breakfast hour each day over Brown's own beloved beverage, in a renewed perusal of his lectures. Through what a mighty world of thought, and fact, and feeling, of terror, and wonder, and beauty, he conducted us — a winged guide—and how solemnly pleasing to think, at the end, that all this broad, deep, beautiful, and majestic world was included in the one subject of the human mind! But Spalding greatly prefers the old, crotchety, cold-blooded, infidel speculator, who laid down laws for man as if he were a sublimated ape or ass, Jeremy Bentham, to the mild, subtle, reverent, and imaginative Thomas Brown.

We come now to the last chapter, and shall try to be as brief as possible in our handling of its numerous platitudes and mistakes.

Bailey of "Festus" is classed with Horne and with Sheridan Knowles; and

we are told that his "fate with posterity is still doubtful." (!!) Browning's "strength of thought struggles through the obscurity of his poems." This, indeed, is true, and suggests to us the image of the wing of an eagle, half-seen, and strongly vibrating, amid an ocean of morning mist. Tennyson is the "only very brilliant poet of our era." He surely means the only very popular poet—till Alexander Smith arose; the assertion, as it is, is just an impertinence and an untruth. Thackeray has no "interest in his incidents," and Dickens is always "interesting." This verdict should simply be inverted, and it will then be believed. Thackeray never fails to be interesting; Dickens abounds in wearisome, wire-spun twaddle. De Quincey's noble papers are praised, but pronounced at the same time "petty;" and not a word is said on the pretensions he has to the character of the purest, the most logical, the most lyrical, the most literally correct, and the most ideally lofty prose writer of the age. But he has no time apparently to spare for De Quincey, inasmuch as he is hurrying to prostrate himself, "with awful reverence prone," before the throne of Macaulay. To enumerate all the blunders in this Macaulay-*morceau*, were to undertake a long and dreary task. After some general remarks, which appear to mean nothing, he commences a comparison of Macaulay to Gibbon—an undertaking not of the most hopeful kind—and which he thus mismanages, according to his wont:—"One feels a temptation to liken this powerful writer to Gibbon, for the exotic aspect of his diction, and still more for the skill with which he insinuates reflection, while seeming only to relate events, or to portray character." "The exotic aspect of his diction." This is true of Gibbon, whose style is intensely foreign, alike in construction, idioms, and language; but, as applied to Macaulay, it is absurd. Macaulay, with all his faults, is thoroughly English. His idiom, language, prejudices, antitheses, "rotundity," to use our author's expression, are all of native growth. Not a German, not a French, not a Latin construction is to be found in all his writings. Mr Spalding might as soon repair to Magus Muir, and bring back an oak, or fir, or broom-bush, as a specimen of a new and elegant exotic, as rank Macaulay with Gibbon or Hume; and to compare his light, hurrying side-glances of thought, with the deep and delicate reflections and the tremendous satirical *sub-voces* and *asides* of the author of the "Decline and Fall," is to show still less critical discrimination. "But the epigrammatic terseness of his style is as much above the cumbrousness of the elder historian, as his leading doctrines are sounder, more philosophical, and more conducive to the good of mankind." This alludes, we suppose, to Gibbon's religious views. These were as cold and false as possible; but would Mr Spalding please to inform us what Macaulay's "leading doctrines are?" We have read all his works once, and most of them twenty times through, and, up to this good hour, we are unable to tell whether he be a Christian or an Infidel, a Unitarian or a Quaker; we know only, negatively, that he is neither an Atheist, a Puritan, nor a Papist. He has, it seems, not only none of "Burke's unwise profusion of ideas," but much "greater skill of deliberate art," than the author of the "Reflections on the French Revolution." If this mean that his writings are more painfully elaborated, and more thoroughly weeded from small faults, than Burke's, it is true, and nothing to the purpose. If it mean that they equal them in genius, or in insight, or in the higher, rarer graces of art, or in naturalness and variety of style, Mr Macaulay himself would be obliged to grant that it was not true. Yet, after all his praise of Macaulay, he places immediately below him, as a historian, Archibald Alison—a writer who, after the tuggings and strainings of a dozen years, has only been able to reach Macaulay's faults of mannerism, gossip, glare, and "unwise profusion" of set descriptions, and never his brilliant point, nervous energy, or seductive fascination.

We have seen scores of descriptions of Thomas Carlyle and his style of history; but we are inclined to rank Mr Spalding's

as, on the whole, the worst we ever read. "From among the reviewers of the day Thomas Carlyle stepped *out* long ago *into* his own *secluded* walk, there to meditate in an independence, which for a time was solitary, but, with an irregular originality of reflection, and an equally irregular power of representation, which *soon* (?) made his words be widely listened to, and must secure them against being speedily forgotten." And so on he drivels, warning young students that they must not expect to comprehend this remarkable mind, since it has never been comprehended either by his vehement friends or alarmed foes; and somewhat mysteriously intimating that his language and thoughts are compounded partly of German elements, partly of English, and principally of elements which no "name would fit except that of the author."

Ere closing, he leaps across the Atlantic, and proceeds to eulogise all America's popular writers, and to ignore or damn with faint praise its real originals. Washington Irving, Perceval, Pierpoint, Sprague, Halleck, &c., receive fully more than their just meed; while Poe's "Raven" is never mentioned. Brockden Brown's romances are called "fragments"—a term which does not fit the best of their number, such as "Edgar Huntly;" and not a word is said of Alston or Lowel. The only American review he seems acquainted with is the poor old stupid "North American"—"Old Grannie," as it is usually called across the water.

But we are tired of the task, although we have not nearly exhausted our materials. We have said enough, however, to convince the discerning that Mr Spalding, although a learned and accomplished man, is a very indifferent critic—particularly of poetry and all kinds of imaginative literature. He wants the native faculty; and it is not more certain "*Poeta nascitur haud fit*," than it is "*Criticus nascitur haud fit*." The critic, as we have repeatedly said already, as well as the poet, must have his vocation taught him from behind and above—must, in one word, be himself a poet.

Part Fifth.—Sacred Authors.

JOHN BUNYAN.

The three greatest *natural* geniuses of Britain hitherto, have been a player, a tinker, and a gauger—Shakspere, Bunyan, and Burns. It is marvellous to think of the *Divinæ particula auræ* passing by palaces and courts as in scorn, and shedding its selectest influences on heads not only uncrowned, but actually loaded by a penumbra of contempt, and the "foregone conclusion" of three of the most unpoetical of professions. Facts like these prove unquestionably, that poetry is a gift, not an art; that *poeta nascitur non fit;* that genius, like the will of that Being of whose breath it is a *minor* inspiration, is sovereign, and, like the wind, bloweth where it listeth; and that to feel contempt for any lawful trade, is a vulgarism and fallacy liable to the exposure and reversal of the Almighty himself.

Shakspere might have been a chimney-sweep instead of a stage-player; Burns might have been a hind instead of a farmer holding his own plough; and Bunyan a camp-suttler, instead of a soldier in the Parliamentary army. It had been the same to the great Breath, which, in poetry as in religion, seems to search about, to wait long, and to "return according to its circuits," in order, by choosing the weak and the base things, yea, and the very nonentities of this world, to bring to nought the things that are, and to confound the things that are mighty. The walls of the seventh heaven of invention are not to be scaled by mere ambition or art; inspiration, if genuine, descends from above, and, in descending, must, like the lightning, be permitted its own proud and imperial choice.

Let, then, the stage-player, the tinker, and the gauger, appear for a moment together upon our stage. The first is a swarthy and Spaniard-looking man, with tall forehead, sharp, sidelong eyes, dark hair curling over his lips and chin, and firm, deep-cut nostril. The second has a fresh complexion, auburn locks, round brow, hair on his upper lip after the old English fashion, and sparkling, glowing eyes, not the least like those of a dreamer, but resembling rather the eyes of "some hot amourist," as John Woodvil hath it. The third has a broad, low brow, palpitating with thought and suffering, bright eyes shivering in their great round orbs with emotion, like the star Venus in the orange west, nostril slightly curved upward, dusky skin, black masses of hair, and dimpled, undecisive chin and cheek. All three have imagination as their leading faculty; but that of the player is wide as the globe, that of the tinker is intense almost to lunacy, and that of the gauger is narrow and vivid as a stream of forked lightning. All three have strong intellect; but the intellect of the one is capacious, that of the other casuistic, and that of the third clear. All are partially educated; but Shakspere's culture is that of the society of his age, Bunyan's that of solitary reading, and Burns's of a compound of both. All are men of "one book:" Shakspere's being the universe,

Bunyan's the Bible, and Burns's the ballad-poetry of Scotland. All are men of intensely ardent temperament: which in Shakspere is subdued by the width of the mind in which the furnace glows, which in Bunyan becomes a purged flame, but which, in poor Burns, bursts out of all restraint into a destructive conflagration. In the works of all, *materiem superat opus:* the genius of Shakspere flaming out of mean structures of farce and tragi-comedy, Bunyan's power overflowing the banks of narrow controversial treatises, and the great soul of Burns o'er-informing the tenement of fugitive poems, *jeux d'esprits*, satires, and semi-scandalous ballads. All sprang from the populace; but, while Shakspere and Burns belonged to its upper stratum, Bunyan appeared amid its lowest dregs, like a new creation amid the slush of chaos. All had something of a religious tendency; but, while in Shakspere it takes a vague, diffusive form, and in Burns never amounts to much more than what he himself calls "an idiot piety," in Bunyan it becomes a deep burning principle of thought and action, at once swallowing up and sanctifying his native genius.

The fate of the three was curious and characteristic. Shakspere, the sublime stage-player, outliving his early self, with those mysterious errors which are partially revealed in his sonnets, subsided into a decent, retired, self-indulgent gentleman, like a dull, sleepy, soaking evening following a day of blended storm and splendour. Burns, after many a vain attempt to rally against the misfortunes and sins of his life and temperament, fell down at last their victim; while John Bunyan, strong in supernal might, victorious over his tendencies, having bound his very madness in chains, and turned his tears and tortures into the elements of hope and triumph, crossed the black river singing in concert with the shining ones, and passed into eternity, perfect through suffering, and resembling rather one of its own native children, than a poor burdened sinner from the City of Destruction. Philosophers might speculate long and vainly on the causes of those very different destinies. Our theory is the simple Christian one:—God endowed the three with almost commensurate powers, but one only, through patient struggle and solemn search, reached the blessed hope and new life of Christianity. And we come to the farther analysis and illustration of Bunyan's genius, with this exulting thought—"we are not about to speak of a ray which has wandered, or even of a magnificent world unfinished, unnamed, unbaptised of God, but of a star once astray, but which returned and received a place in the great galaxy of the worshipping and holy heavens."

It is curious to mark the slow and gradual progress of this man's fame, when compared with the rapid growth of his reputation. It was to some extent the same with Shakspere and Burns. William Shakspere was very popular in his lifetime, for the sake of the humour and geniality of his plays, but it took a century or two for the world to see that he was the greatest poet that ever lived. Burns's wild, witty, and pathetic poems pervaded all Scotland like the winds of April, as swift and as soft; but forty years had to pass ere Carlyle ventured to pronounce him the first man, in genius, his country had ever produced. Bunyan's first part of the "Pilgrim" was speedily translated into other languages, as well as widely circulated in his own; but nearly two hundred years revolved ere any critic was hardy enough to call it a work of genius. Previously to this, it was named and praised with misgiving, and in cold and timid terms:—"Wonderful book for a tinker; clever allegory; pity it is so Calvinistic; considerable dramatic power in it; an excellent book for the vulgar." Such were some of the *morceaux* of criticism with which the eighteenth century bestrewed it. Dr Johnson, to be sure, praised it for its invention and the conduct of its story, but laid too much stress upon the mere popularity it had acquired; and, though he compared its opening passage to the first lines of Dante, he seemed ignorant of the author's other works, and probably regarded the "Pilgrim's Progress" as a kind of *lusus naturæ*—an

exception, and not an expression, of the general character of the author's mind. Scott says of it, in rather a disparaging tone, that "it rarely fails to make an impression upon children and persons of the lower rank of life." Campbell compares Bunyan to Spenser, but it is with a patronising air, and he seems to start back, affrighted, at the "sound himself hath made." Cowper, indeed, long before, had sung the "Ingenious Dreamer" in worthy strains; but it required the tongue of Coleridge, the pens of Macaulay and Montgomery, and the pencils of Martin and David Scott, not to speak of the excellent lives by Philip, Southey, and others, fairly to elevate him to that position, as an unconscious artist, whence it were hopeless now to dislodge him, and before which the intellectual and the Christian world universally and emulously bend.

We are not sure but the history of all works of profound genius and permanent influence is precisely similar. They are not, in general, as Wordsworth thinks, ignored or despised at first, but consisting, as all great productions must, of the splendid and the deep, the bright foam above and the strong billow below, their brilliance attracts in their own age, while their profounder qualities fascinate the future. It was so with Homer, with Æschylus, with Sophocles, with Lucretius, with Dante, with Spenser, with Milton, with Dryden, with Cowper, with Byron, with Wordsworth himself. All these obtained reputation in their lifetimes, for properties in their writings of interest, or elegance, or oddity, or splendour, which were not their rarest or most characteristic, and all afterwards grew up to that fame which now "waits like a menial" on their immortal names. To this there are exceptions, but we believe it to be the rule, and a rule, moreover, in strict accordance with the principles which prevail through the universe. We *see* long before we can *weigh* the star.

In analysing the mind of Bunyan, the first quality which strikes us is the thorough equality and almost identity of the subjective and the objective. Not only are thought and imagery *one*, but imagery and reality seem one also. He does not think, but imagine—not imagine, but see. We have no doubt whatever, that many of his pictures, like Blake's, stood out from the eye; that he saw visions as well as dreamed dreams, and that this perilous faculty did not unhinge his mind, owing to the strength of his bodily constitution, the simplicity of his habits, and that vigorous intellect which burned, yet was not consumed, amid the blaze of his imagination. But, if ever a man since the prophets of Israel deserved, in a lower sense, the name of "seer," it was John Bunyan. It was as if his brain throbbed and thought in his eye, every motion of which seemed "scintillating soul." If this objectiveness might be termed diseased, it was the divine disease of Dante, of Spenser, and of Michael Angelo—a disease perfectly compatible with strength of judgment, and even with severity of purpose—but the infection of which has, unfortunately, not been perpetuated, for the two who in modern times most resembled him in this quality, wanting Bunyan's ballast, became morbid, if not mad. We refer to Blake and Shelley. In Bunyan, at the period at least when he wrote his works, it was a power healthy as the vision of the eagle, and yet peculiar and inimitable as the eyeless intuitions of clairvoyance—that blind goddess who is reported to see so far.

In close connection with, and dependence on, this peculiar faculty, is his childlike simplicity, or unconsciousness of self. This is, we think, always connected with real sight. Who is *proud* of the landscape which he beholds, however *pleased* he may be with the spectacle? He may, indeed, afterwards begin to speculate on the power and perspicacity of his eye; but he will have little leisure and less inclination to pursue this, if visions after visions, new and varied, continue to press forward in panoramic vividness and succession upon his soul. As to "dare, and to dare, and to dare," was Danton's method for a revolutionist, so to "see, and to see, and to see," till the eye be shut in death, or rather opened on eternal realities, is the method and the history of a poet.

Nay, the fact that these sights are frequently terrific and bewildering, is itself enough to check, if not to crush, the vanity of vision. And how often must the dreamer, as he awakes, like Jacob, exclaim, "How dreadful is this place!" and not always, like Jacob, be able to add, "It is none other than the gate of *heaven!*" Perhaps, rather, he has been led past the mouth of the pit, and his cry has been, not that of exultation, but of anguish and despair.

Bunyan, at least, felt in the first instance no great joy, and no selfish satisfaction at all, in his marvellous dreams. Unlike Caliban, he sometimes cried "not to dream again." Did he ever awake, like poor De Quincey, in struggles, and cry out, "I shall sleep no more?" Whether awake or asleep, his visions seemed to have passed before him swiftly, as clouds in a wind-tossed sky—himself as helpless as the wanderer who watches their veering shapes and changeful shadows amid the solitary hills. He had thus a "dreadful post of observation;" but it did not darken every hour, but brightened on and on, till, behold! the morning was spread upon the mountains, and in a cloudless sky the "sun rose upon Christian, and he had daylight all the rest of his journey." Something, indeed, of childish gratulation does appear in the prefatory poem to the second part of the "Pilgrim," but it is child-like, the mere momentary crowing of an infant; and is speedily swallowed up in the fresh glories which dawn upon his touched and ever-advancing spirit.

How sublime this perpetual attitude of reception! And how little does a mere literary man—perpetually on tiptoe—now seeking to smile down, and now to frown up inspiration—or lashing himself into a false *furor* by selfish passion, look beside Bunyan lying prostrate before the Invisible Power which "moves him at times," and draws forth from him the simplest, yet noblest music. And while remembering the vast difference between the inspiration of prophecy and of genius, we may nevertheless say, that not more abandoned to the power of supernal influence was Ezekiel, when lifted up by a lock of his hair between earth and heaven—or when watching the dreadful wheels as they moved in the might of the unseen Spirit, than was the tinker of Elstowe, when following the footsteps of Christian in that immortal pilgrimage, or when beleaguering Mansoul with those multitudinous hosts of darkness. His visions alighted on him as he sat still and expectant, like those cloven tongues of fire which crowned the heads of the disciples at Pentecost.

We have alluded to Ezekiel. Some critics have ventured to deny to him the high poetic quality which they concede to Isaiah and Jeremiah. Now, we admit that his language and imagery are not so rich as theirs; but, then, how grand the objects and the scenery he beholds and describes. His style serves severely to daguerreotype the vast, fire-edged, and wind-swept visions which crossed his daring and solitary soul. It is the same with Bunyan. His style seems poor and bald compared to John Howe's or Jeremy Taylor's: it has no beauty; no golden images sparkle on his page; but his figures are forms; his images are characters; he does not decorate, but create; and though seeming, like that prophet of old, to stand in a valley of dry bones, he soon causes them to live and move—an exceeding great army, fresh with colour, strong of sinew, and prepared for the battle. In him imagination exists, not as a dilution, but as an intense essence; and while the least florid of writers, he is the most poetical of thinkers. In this point he resembles Dante, who, while possessed of infinite inventiveness and sublimest conception, is as literal and hard in his diction as Defoe. But he *has* similes scattered, though sparingly, over his poem; whereas all Bunyan's are derived from Scripture, as if he were afraid to adorn the borders of that solemn way with any flowers but those which had been transplanted from the garden of God.

This peculiarity is quite in keeping with Bunyan's child-like character. Children seldom speak in metaphor; but they are all essentially poets: they live in a world

of illusion. A garden walk becomes to them a pilgrim's path, which they crowd with imaginary characters and adventures. A puddle near it is an Atlantic, with a thousand ships sailing on its bosom, with perpetual conflictions of storm and calm. They weave everlasting little Robinson Crusoes and Progresses of their own, and, even when they sleep, the fine shuttle of their fancy continues to move in its aerial loom of dreams. This poetic tendency is too often crushed by worldly influences; but in some favoured souls it survives, and becomes the germ of the artist. But in Bunyan—and Bunyan alone—it seems to have remained *entire*, unchilled by worldly feelings, for of these he had little — unmodified by culture, for his culture was slender—and having defied time itself to cool its virgin flame. Whether dreaming or awake, a blackguard or a saint, in youth, manhood, or age, in the pulpit or with the pen in his hand, living or dying, John Bunyan was equally and always a child.

His exceeding *earnestness* is the next quality we notice in him. No feeble, factitious Christian was John Bunyan. All his works beat with heart, with passionate purpose, with deep faith, and with the reverberations of past suffering. Every work he has written is a chapter in his autobiography; and the more unintended, the more vital the chapter is. We wonder that Thomas Carlyle has never described the earnestness of Bunyan. Had he tried it, it might have been in language something like this:—"Here, too, under a poor shed of Bedfordshire, there appeared a brave, truehearted man, striving forward, under the immensities, and toward the eternities, bearing, in his own stout dialect, a burden on his back, and seeking, as with unutterable groanings, to cast it from him, and be free. No sham woes were his, no hearsay was hell, no simulacrum was sin, no vague vapour death, to him. He had been in the outer, nay, the outmost darkness; he had awoke from terrific sleep, and felt the worm that dieth not around his neck, and heard at his bedside the ripple of the slow-moving waves of the unquenchable fire. He had been in the 'iron cage' and in the grim dungeons of Despair; had groped in his bosom for the key called Promise; and had shouted in trembling joy, as he saw from Mount Clear a little of the glory of the city. Nay, in the Black River he had once and again dipped his feet, long before he was called to pass through it. Honour to thee, brave pilgrim, for thou also wert a hero; and, with all thy tinkering, thou hast not mended, but made, one right manly piece of work, which shall live long in the memory of men."

All this Carlyle might say, and it were all true, but not the whole truth. Bunyan, indeed, fled from his burden of sin and his City of Destruction, but it was into the arms of a Saviour. His burden clung to him like the gripe of death, till he saw the cross and the sepulchre, and felt, without being able fully to express, save by tears, the divine mystery, the awful incarnation of love exhibited there. Carlyle's "Sartor" seeks after peace as sincerely as Bunyan, but, in haste, or pride, or some fatal blindness, he overlooks the cross, overleaps the sepulchre, and stumbles here and there, till, by a retrograde motion, he gains the town of False Security, which is hard by the City of Destruction, and which trembles at times, in sympathy with the earthquakes, muttering fitfully below *its* devoted towers. Or, shall we rather say, Bunyan is his own Christian, a manful struggler, who, if he falls, rises again and pursues his journey; who, if he wanders, returns to the way; and who, if he trembles, trembles *forward;* while "Sartor" too often resembles Mr Weary-of-the-World (not *weaned* from the world), whose life was a long suicide, who fed on bile, and mistook the recoil of hatred and disgust at the earth for humble, prayerful, and simple-minded search, after a better country.

Many, we daresay, are disposed to say of Bunyan, as Joseph's brethren said of him, in a sneering spirit, "Behold, this dreamer cometh!" Pshaw! "a mere half-lunatic man of genius." But let such, for their own sakes, beware of entering into controversy with this dreamer, else he will

make a fool of them all. Let them beware, too, of remaining too long in his eye, else he may hold them up on his rude calotype to immortal scorn. This lunatic dreamer can argue as acutely as any casuist or schoolman. He can, by the quietest touch of sarcasm, dropped as from the shadow of his strong hand, wither up a pompous pretender, tear off the mantle of a hypocrite, expose a fool, and blast an impostor. This dreamer is at times dangerous, alike in his earnest anger, and in the cool *naïveté* of his satire. He has a rough, forceful logic, ay, and a "tinkler tongue" of his own. His dreams are dramas, rich, vivid, varied as Shakspere's. He carries along with him a great key, which can open every lock of human nature—the chapels of its worship, the dungeons of its depair, its airy roofs of grandeur, and its pleasant halls of mirth. He paints at one time a Beulah, and at another a by-path to hell; now a Mercy, and now a Madame Wanton; now green-headed Ignorance, and now Mr Greatheart; now Giant Maul, and now the three Shining Ones; now the den of Diabolus, and now that City which hath no need of the sun. "Mighty," too, is this dreamer "in the Scriptures," and his enemies must know, that when he holds a sword in his hand it is no misty meteor, but a right Jerusalem blade; it is the two-edged sword of the Spirit, it has been bathed in heaven, and it glows and glitters, "anointed for the slaughter."

The Bible we have called Bunyan's one book; and his case corroborates the common notion, beware of the man of one book—of one who by frequent perusals has drunk so deeply into a book's spirit, has got so much into its thought and feeling—travels, in short, so easily and naturally in its track, that, without any conscious imitation, his works become duplicates of the original. This is true of other books, but much more of the Bible. It is a Pactolus, and he who bathes in it comes out dipped in gold; nay, it resembles that other fabled stream which made the bather invulnerable and immortal. Bunyan had read little else; he had read it, too, in circumstances which burned and branded its language upon his soul; he had read it as its blessed words swam on his eyesight through tears; he had read it amid the Slough of Despond, by the red lightnings of Sinai, and as he gazed upwards from the Delectable Hills to the far-streaming glory of the City; even in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, he had continued to clasp while unable to see it; every chapter in it was a chapter in his history, and every verse touched and thrilled some chord in his heart. Like the poor man's lamb, "it lay in his bosom, and was to *him* as a daughter." Many millions have loved the Bible, but we question if any one surpassed or equalled Bunyan in the depth and fervour of his love. Many have framed concordances, and made entire transcriptions of it, but Bunyan's concordance was his memory, and it lay all transcribed, every word and syllable of it, in his heart.

Bunyan's theology is now despised by many who admire his genius; and yet, when stripped of the phraseology and severed from the mistakes of his age, his book seems to contain the best, clearest, and boldest exhibition of truth ever given by uninspired man. Man's anomalous condition by nature — the fearful and hereditary wo which hangs over his cradle—the dark something, call it a rent, or fissure, or fatal flaw, which mars his being *ab origine*—the God-inspired thirst for light, safety, and a sublimer existence which comes over him—the struggles through which this feeling must be borne—the worthlessness of mere human merit—the importance of the Spirit's teaching—the power of a simple-minded faith in divine revelation—the glorious lines of truth and beauty, which, rising from earth, and stooping from heaven, meet and converge in the cross—the doctrine of atonement, shining, in the shape of an uplifted lamb, through the darkness of a guilty earth—the importance of humility—the progressive character of the Christian life—the warlike attitude of the Christian himself—the resistance he meets at every step—the fate of the miserable pretenders to his faith and walk, who entangle and annoy

him—his constant dependence upon supernatural aid—his feebleness and frequent falls—the personal character of real Christianity—the increasing clearness of his path—the certainty of his coming to his journey's end—the fact that the complexion of his death-bed is determined by that of his life, and the type which the individual believer forms of the history of the church as a whole; these are some of the important truths which, apart from special dogmas, are presented in the pictured page of Bunyan. But how they seem to live, and move, and swell, and fructify there! How different from the dry catalogues and dead rattling autumn leaves of our catechisms and creeds! Let our theological students burn their systems, and apply themselves to John Bunyan. They often lose the Christian path in mazes, or sink it in marshes, or carry it along roads, uniformly flinty; he invests it with the vitality, the variety, and the beauty of real life; and, whether it be with a sunbeam or a flash of lightning, or a glare of hell-fire, or the chiaro-scuro of death's valley, that he shows that narrow way, it is always clear, as if cut out now in blackest ebony, and now in whitest ivory; but in both distinct and vivid as the "terrible crystal, and the body of heaven in its clearness."

We pass now from Bunyan's general qualities to his writings, and on these we shall be rapid in our remarks. We shall omit his theological treatises, properly so called, and also his minor allegories, such as the "Life and Death of Mr Badman." The "Visions of Heaven and Hell," usually printed in his works, are decidedly not his; their better passages are in style above him, and their worst are in spirit beneath him. The author, our readers will remember, introduces Hobbes into hell, and minutely describes his punishment and feelings there. The Bunyan of the "Pilgrim," even had he seen that spirit in torment, would, like his own heroes near the open mouth of the pit, have passed on in silent awe and sorrow. The "Visions of Heaven," again, are apparently written by a scholar, who quotes Milton, and rounds splendid sentences. We confine ourselves to the "Grace Abounding," the "Holy War," and the "Pilgrim's Progress."

The first is his heart turned inside out—is his inner history minutely and lingeringly portrayed; this lifts it far out of the sphere of mere art; literary merit it has hardly any; the little chapters into which it is divided are successive throbs of his big heart. The strangest thing about it is the clearness and self-possession, which not only distinguish his record of his past sufferings, but which have evidently been with him through every step of the terrible process. It is as though a madman were to feel with his own finger his pulse while at the wildest; it is as though a martyr in a burning fiery furnace were to measure his paces through the fire, or to count the minutes of his agony. Bunyan proves himself equal for tasks like these. All the agonised experiences of his heart—its tumults—its treacherous quiet—its fluctuations, so speedy, between the tempest and the calm—its trances, dreams, and strange imaginings, have been observed, as by some calm, collateral eye, and have been jotted down, as by the firm finger of a bystander. That eye and that finger are those, in fact, of Bunyan's own clear and powerful intellect, which had the art of standing aside from the fierce rush of his fancy, and of beholding, remembering, and registering its whirling words, and yet wilder conceptions. It is conscious frenzy, a fearful gift, only possessed by two or three since Bunyan, one of whom, strange to tell, was Rousseau.

Bunyan's confessions, however, unlike Rousseau's, are almost entirely of spiritual sin and spiritual struggle. His sins were all of the spirit, and none of the flesh. Whatever ardour there might be originally in his temperament, was soon drained out of it, into the reservoirs of his imagination and heart, and these in their turn either slept or stormed, to the lulling zephyrs or the rushing blasts of his religion. Sore for a season is the contest around the wanderer between the sun and the wind; but the wind at last subsides, and the sun, shining from a higher sphere, and burning with a purer

blaze, sheds upon his path what seems only a mightier moonlight, a "holier day," so soft is its warmth, and so shorn and meek its effulgence.

The life of the Christian is described in Scripture under many analogies. Three, however, are most common and most striking. It is now a race ("so run that ye may obtain"); now a walk ("walk ye as children of the light"); and now a battle ("fight the good fight of faith"). The two latter of these seem particularly to have struck Bunyan's imagination, and, to prove it, he has written a book on each—the "Holy War" and the "Pilgrim's Progress." Which of these two books should be the better, was, we think, entirely a question of time. Had he written the "Holy War" first, and the "Pilgrim's Progress" last, the last had been first, and the first last. But, ere he built up Mansoul, or marshalled around it those dark armies, he had in some measure exhausted his creative genius, emptied out his martial ardour, and strained the energies of the allegory itself, in the broad and manifold structure of the "Pilgrim's Progress;" a book which, besides its peaceful pictures, contains the record of some contests which in fire and vigour Homer himself has not surpassed; and the praise of certain warriors, such as Valiant-for-Truth, "with his sword cleaving in blood to his hand" —worthy of the days when battle had its deity, and war might still be called divine.

And yet, though somewhat worn, the old parliamentary soldier enters on the "Holy War" with marvellous spirit. It is a dream, less *praisemblable*, less varied, less beautiful than the "Pilgrim," but full of rugged power and unique purpose. There are florid wars as well as books, with fine and empty flourishes of endeavour, with *nidering* commanders and fainthearted troops. Bunyan's is of a different kind. It is earnest, fierce; all scabbards tossed away, no armour for backs, and victory or death the watchword of the day. The field is wide and one—"Mansoul;" the hosts are twain—those who are called chosen and faithful, and those who are the serfs of sin and Satan. The commanders are also two—the Word made flesh, his garments dyed in blood, his eyes as a flame of fire, his face more marred than that of man, and the Prince of Darkness, with pride and fury glaring through his miserable eyes, with the scars of thunder on his cheek, holding, in defiance, his garment of gloom around his scorched frame, and saying, "Evil, be thou my good;" and saying again, "What matter *where*, if I be still the same?"—the result one; for it has been settled from everlasting that Mansoul shall be saved, Diabolus defeated, and "that great country Universe" made as happy and beautiful as the throne round which it revolves. Let those who would see in what living fire, in what crowding figures—not of speech, but of action—in what bare yet burning words, and with what profusion of martial incident, and eloquence of martial dialogue, Bunyan tells this brief but pregnant tale, read his "Holy War;" although, we fear, it lies now neglected as some old claymore which once reeked at gory Culloden.

Not so with his "Pilgrim's Staff." *That* who has not seen and handled, and now wept over, and now worshipped, beside? Who has forgot his emotions on reading this wonderful book, which, for the first time, seemed to realise to him his early faith in Christianity? It is to us, at least, an era in our life. We read it beside our mother's knee; and never can we forget the Dreamer, or that road which his genius has mapped out for evermore. Never can we forget even the little well-worn copy of "Cooke's Classics," with its dark binding, its crude prints, and its torn-out leaves here and there, which contained the precious treasure, and on which we can hardly now think or look without tears—so deeply are joys and sorrows of our own bound up and blended with its memory.

We may sum up what we have further to say of the "Pilgrim," under some remarks on its pictures, its characters, its scenes, and the comparative merits of its two parts.

It is the only perfect picture-book in literature. Every page of it might be illustrated, nay, is illustrated already, by

the painter's hand. Many of its pictorial points have had full justice done to them by artists, but there are still two or three we have never seen successfully represented, if even attempted at all. One is the interior of the City of Destruction. Who, going to work on the hints dropped by Bunyan, shall paint us the Lust-lanes, Murder-alleys, Thief-corners, and broad Blasphemy-squares of that fearful place, with the lightnings ever and anon dipping down into its midst, and with the scowl of heaven forming a permanent and prophetic blackness over its walls? Then there is Beelzebub's Castle lowering over against the bright Wicket-gate, with one solitary watchman pacing along its battlements, night and day, haggard with his eternal vigil, and calling, as each new pilgrim approaches, on his archers to take their aim. Then there is Turnaway, brought back by devils, and with the words inscribed on his back, "Wanton Professor and Damnable Apostate." And, in fine, there is still waiting for representation the FACE of Ignorance, with the blank of vacuity and the blackness of darkness mingling in its expression, as he is refused admittance at the gate, and told, that he who could scarcely go forward, must be taken in a whirlwind *back!*

The variety of the characters in this book is wonderful, and the vividness of their portraiture. So is the intensity of the individualism of all and each, even of those who represent large classes of men. But perhaps the most surprising thing is the liking Bunyan entertains, and makes us entertain, for all of them. It is so with all creators. But it is less strange in mere artists like Shakspere and Scott, than in one whose art was subordinate to his earnestness. Whatever be the cause, the effect is certain. We may condemn, we must pity, but we do not, and cannot, hate one even of the vile and depraved characters introduced into this parable. We sigh behind Pliable; we would box the ears of Obstinate, indeed, but we would box him *onwards;* and we feel a sneaking kindness even for Worldly Wiseman, for Shame, for Adam the First, for Green-headed Ignorance, and his complaisant ferryman. Why? Because their author unconsciously felt, and unconsciously wished us to feel, the same; because all genius has covered, with a like catholic mantle, the basest and lowest of its handiworks, even as the sun dyes worlds and worms in the same radiance, and gilds the clouds of the sky and the webs of the spider with the same gold; and, indeed, it must do so from its peculiar power, which is that of looking on a broad scale, and in a mild light, upon the affairs and productions of the universe.

There is but one character in the "Pilgrim" for whom we profess a thorough detestation, and that because he not only refuses to be good, but ignores the possibility of all goodness, and the existence of God himself. This is *Old* Atheist. How well named! for there are no young Atheists. How hollow his laughter! And yet we have heard its echo again and again, from learned throats, too, in these miserable days of ours. But never did we enter into the perfect badness, the intricate abomination of the character, till we saw David Scott's picture of him. Just look at it a moment. There he stands in the way of the two simple-minded wanderers—tall—a very pyramid of scorn and pride, with fingers uplifted and snapping at the idea of a God and immortality; with long ears, as if listening, but *hearing nothing;* with eyes full of lust, cunning, and malice; and with words which you hear not, but seem to see entering into, and withering, the very heartstrings of the pilgrims. It is a figure which might be divided among a multitude of modern sceptics—the long ears being those of F. Newman; the large mouth "speaking swelling words of vanity," standing for Parker with his superabundant Yankee twaddle, the *figure* not at all dissimilar from that of him of the "Oversoul," and the eyes—no!—*they* are unparalleled since the days of the author of "Candide and Micromegas," unless, perhaps, under the brows of Master Lewes of the "Leader."

The scenery of the "Pilgrim's Progress" is to us one of its dearest elements. We have often puzzled our brains to conceive,

especially when in Bedfordshire, and looking at hills which you were tempted to kick out of your road, like husks in a pine-wood, how Bunyan, reared in a country so tame, and who, like poor Cowper, could never hope to see mountains till he saw them in heaven, has yet sketched an outline of scenery in the "Pilgrim" so free, so varied, so bold, and so studded with lofty hills. Many green meadows, like Ease, he must have seen, and some evening landscapes from church towers, which might have suggested Beulah, but where could he have studied for the deep solitary Valley of Humiliation, or the Valley of the Shadow of Death, or for the Delectable Mountains, where Mount Danger seems to tremble as it looks down its own tremendous precipices; where, from Mount Error, not momentary avalanches, but momentary *men*, are falling, to be crushed to atoms at the base; where, from Mount Caution, are to be seen the blind wanderers among the tombs, remaining in the congregation of the dead; where, on Mount Marvel, stands the man removing mountains by a word; where, on Mount Innocence, appears he against whom Prudence and Ill-will are flinging their dirt in vain; and where, highest far, Mount Clear looks through crystalline air, right upward to the golden gates of the city? And then there is the Slough of Despond, and the shaggy Sinai, and the steep Hill Difficulty, and the wild roaring torrent edging the grounds of Giant Despair and his frowning castle, and innumerable other outstanding points or pinnacles of scenic interest. Indeed, had the inspired tinker travelled in Scotland, had he visited the black gorge of Glencoe, had he gone up Glen Mirk alone as the shadows of evening were doubling its darkness, had he bathed after sunset in the dark waters of Loch Lea, had he stood on Lochnagar, and looked down through mist on the eternal snow lying in its clefts, or on the lonely lakes surrounding its base, or had he, on the summit of Ben Macdhui, seen the awful array of giants which seem absolutely to press on each other, and make the spot the "Meeting of the Mountains," with one tarn, dark and deep as a murderer's eye, watching the precipices which rise to three thousand feet on three of its sides, he would not have better painted the wilder and grander scenes in the "Pilgrim's Progress." As he did none of this, so much the stronger evidence has he given of the force and the rich resources of his own genius.

The first part of the "Pilgrim" may be called the Iliad, and the second the Odyssey, of Bunyan's genius. There are in the one more sublimity, boldness, and wealth; in the other, more tenderness, sweetness, and beauty. The road in the first part is travelled by sunlight, chequered indeed with clouds, but producing bold masses of light and shadow; in the second, the sweet, still light of a full moon rests on the whole landscape. The second has no such Dantesque pictures as the Man in the Cage —no such Homeric contest as that with Apollyon—no such romantic episode as that of Giant Despair—no such exquisite satiric sketch as that of Talkative—no such happily-conceived series of adventures as those of Faithful—no one character so well sustained as Ignorance, and no one death-scene like that of Christian and Hopeful. The gloss, too, is in some measure off the subject, and the road has not quite the same freshness of glory.

But then, in the second part, there is the matchless female character of Mercy; there are the boys, dear little fellows, diversifying the road with their fine prattle; there is one rich peep into the gossip and scandal of the City of Destruction, where Mrs Timorous, Lady Bats-Eyes, &c., play their parts; there is that jewel of a man, Mr Brisk; there is the Valley of Humiliation shown in a new and more congenial light, with a boy resting and singing on that lonely sward, where first Apollyon had spread his dragon wings; there is the gradual gathering in of tributary pilgrims to swell the general current, which at last weds the black river; there are old Honest and Valiant-for-Truth; there is the storming of Doubting Castle; and there is the characteristic passage of each pilgrim through the waters, especially that of Much-Afraid, who goes over singing, but no one could tell the words of her song,

for it is the language of the spirit-world, already trembling on her dying tongue. It is wonderful how Bunyan has passed over the same road twice, without in one instance repeating or imitating himself, but pouring out, at every turning, from his overflowing invention, new incidents, new characters, new meaning, and new life. In the "Odyssey," Homer has changed the scene, the hero, the mode of life, perhaps the age, and thus easily secured variety to his second work. Bunyan has dared, in both his parts, the difficulties of the same scene, of similar characters, and a similar moral, and has not dared them in vain.

In those works, allegory came to its culmination, and has since declined. We have had no great work in this style since. The best allegories of later days have been the short papers of Addison, who has caught much of Bunyan's spirit and of his simplicity of style, and has added a quiet mellowness of colouring all his own. Johnson's are in general too turgid and laboured; his best thing of this sort, the "Vultures," is rather a fable than an allegory. The express imitations of Bunyan (with the exception of the history of Tender-Conscience, which is very interesting, and has one splendid description, that of the Cave of Contemplation) are contemptible.

Bulwer has some forcible allegories in the "Student;" Edgar Poe has left one or two striking, almost sublime, dreams of a mystical description. And there are many others, we believe, scattered through our periodical literature. But we think that the time has nearly arrived for a new allegory adapted to the age, and expressing the deep cravings, wild wanderings, peculiar temptations, and only possible resting-place of sincere religious thinkers at present. Such an allegory, if thoroughly well executed, would do more than many elaborate treatises to show us our present state of progress, would say things which formal statement could not say, would dart a broad light upon some of the dark and difficult places of our present road, would turn our perplexities, our uncertainties, and divine despairs into beauty, our groanings that cannot be uttered into music, and if it did not calm, might brighten the waves of our tempest-tossed era. The hour is well-nigh come for such a work, but where is the man?

We cannot close without alluding to the fearful religious signs of this our time, so different from the age of Bunyan. Could the glorious dreamer of Elstowe look down from that spiritual eminence, far beyond Beulah, and higher far than Mount Clear, which he has reached, he would see a scene which might at first amaze and confound his spirit—that Bible, which he believed as his own existence, labouring in eclipse, and shedding disastrous twilight upon the churches of Christ—thousands waiting in silence and eager expectancy for its emergence from the shadow—thousands more desiring that the twilight may terminate in utter night, and prepared with their odes to be sung at the great funeral, and their epitaphs to be inscribed on the everlasting tomb—thousands more still wandering in various degrees of uncertainty below the labouring orb,

> "As it hangs black, with'ring intense,
> The wreck of its magnificence"—

some saying, "We trusted that it had been this that should have redeemed Israel;" others not daring to look above, but working in the darkened harvest-field the more actively that doomsday seems near; and other some wringing their hands, and crying, "Oh, that we had never been born in an age of blackening scepticism as this!" —around, meanwhile, heard the sound of travellers dashed down hidden rocks—of feet hurrying backwards to old cities of sin they had forsaken—of avalanches falling, and earthquakes heaving, the nations angry, and blood beginning to drizzle down through the lurid air. Mightier still may the anguish grow, deeper may fall the darkness, more complex and fearful the plot, as the dreamer continues to gaze; but he will soon cease to fear for the result. He will trace the eclipse rather to a fog from below, than to a final withdrawal of light from above. He will confide in the mercy, the power, and the promise of his Prince, and feel certain that he can and will roll

away the gloomy shadow, and restore the fullest original effulgence of the beams—nay, give the orb "new-spangled ore," ere it again "flame in the forehead of the morning sky."

Let us also take courage. We have seen a mighty ship sunk and lost for a season amid mist that shrouded its form, waves that made its timbers creak, and tempest that tore every shred of sail from the rigging; but, if we feared, it was only till we remembered the strength of the vessel, the skill of the pilot, and that it had surmounted a thousand seas before, and we waited in anxiety, but in firm faith that it would again emerge, like a star of the sea from a cloud, victorious over the storm. We have seen the sun in eclipse—watched the great shadow passing over his disk—seen the orb striving, as with arms of light, to resist the progress of the burden, but in vain—seen him struggling, as among the breakers—felt the awe and silence of the moment when the victory of darkness seemed complete, and when, as the dews began to fall, the birds to cease their song, and the stars to appear, it seemed to emit a ghastly and murderous smile; but even then we felt that the *sun was safe*, and never safer than when the shadow seemed its eternal home. And so we feel the profoundest conviction that the Bible and Christianity, in all that is essential and divine, are safe, shall by and by surmount and burn into the train of their own glory the fogs and mists of German and other scepticism, and shed, not an evening, but a morning ray of Divine influence and power upon the strange, dark history of earth.

DR JOHNSON.*

While most people in the present day admit Dr Johnson's power as a whole, and grant him to be an honest, fearless, and warmhearted man, much prejudice exists against his peculiar notions and feelings in reference to Christianity, as well as against his critical character and achievements. We propose trying to set the public mind right, so far as our power extends, upon both these topics.

And, first, as to his Christianity, it is called "gloomy," "bigoted," "morose," "superstitious," and so forth. Now, it is singular that no one says that *he himself* was morose. He was, on the contrary, a "fine old fellow," very irritable, very pompous, and at times very savage; but full of kindness, of jocularity, of sociality, a warm friend, and a pleasant companion, whose great delight was in clubs; in short, as he said himself, a "very clubable man." He had, indeed, his gloomy hours; but that these sprang principally from his religion we do not believe. They sprang from his temperament, and from the deep views his intellect took of the miseries of human life. He saw and felt more thoroughly than most, even of wise men, the unsatisfactoriness of earthly enjoyments—the emptiness of earthly honours—the shortness of earthly life—the insincerity and deceitfulness of the human heart—and the reality, the uniform pressure, and the terrible mysteriousness of the woes of the world. He "sate in the centre," and how could he "enjoy bright day?" He spake as he saw. His temperament did, indeed, somewhat discolour his perceptions; but it did not alter or impair them. It was not his fault that made to his view

> "The sun like blood, the earth a tomb,
> The tomb a hell, and hell itself a murkier
> gloom."

Nor is this estimate altogether untrue, although it be partial. Of course, when a being so shadowy as Temperament holds the scales, it is difficult to strike the balance between the bright and the dark view of things. But we suspect that Johnson

* "Boswell's Life of Johnson, together with Tour to the Hebrides." Edited by the Right Honourable John Wilson Croker. London: J. Murray.

and John Foster arrived by different roads to a tolerably correct conception of the truth. Happiness exists here only in dim embryo and half-developed bud. Our pleasures are often felt, *at the very moment* of their enjoyment, to be delusions; our sorrows seldom. Life in all cases begins with the wail of a mother's and a child's anguish, and ends in the apparent defeat of death. Many hours want their pleasures; scarce one is free from its anxieties. *Most* of our misery springs, it may be said, from ignorance. Be it so. But, since our ignorance is so great, how great must be our misery. And even when our knowledge is increased, how true the words of the wise man—"He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow."

Johnson set himself most determinedly against all cant; and one cant he found especially prevalent, and with it he fiercely warred—the cant of happiness, or, to express it more accurately in one of his own Brobdignagian words, the cant of "felicitation." Many people he found perpetually shouting, "*Optime!*"—if we are not happy, we should be; all is for the best; and after all drawbacks and deductions are made, is not this a very comfortable little world on the whole, if not exactly, as Leibnitz asserts, "*the* best of all possible worlds?" Johnson says, emphatically, "No; *this* world is not happy. *We* are not happy. It is, indeed, in a measure, our own blame; but still, there is the fact, account for it as you may. Man is far from happy; and were he crowned with a crown of stars, and given the milky way for a sceptre, he would continue far from happy still. There is only one thing that ever can make him even approximatively happy here, and that is—the Christian hope of a better life, and the operation of that hope upon his character and principles." This, we think, was the sum and substance of Dr Johnson's theological creed. He was driven to Christianity by his profound feeling of human woes, and of the wants of his own nature and heart. He had tried everything else—study, and found it a weariness, when not a burden and a wo; fame, and found it the dream of a bubble; wine, and found it a raging and mocking madness; woman, too, and found her *help*, indeed, invaluable, but her love, as men are wont to idealise it, a delusion; society, and found it a restless arena, fitted to excite, but unable to satisfy; and he came at last to the conclusion, that there was nothing in this world worth living for, but the promise of, and the preparation for, another; and that all the lights of science, literature, and philosophy were darkness, compared to the red hues shed over the Judean hills by the parting steps of Christ, as the prophecy and promise of his coming again. He did not, indeed (and here lay his wisdom, and this showed his want of fanaticism), abandon the use of the pleasures which Providence allotted him, and become an austere anchorite. He continued, and with all his might, too, to try and wring out of all lawful pleasures what good there was in them. But this he did with no expectation of complete or ultimate satisfaction, for *that* he knew it was not in their power to give, but solely that they might strengthen or amuse him in his progress toward that grand and only fountain of peace and soul-security which rises in another world.

It has been often said, that Dr Johnson, as well as Foster, failed to see life in its beauty, its nice arrangements, its poetry, and its hopeful tendencies. Had this been said to the former, he would have gruffly replied, "All canting absurdity. There is beauty, indeed, in nature, although my dim eyes cannot see it very clearly, and although I hate to hear poetasters whining about purling streams and pastoral crooks; but I can admire better than they the solemn magnificence of forests, the outspread expanse and booming thunders of ocean, and the dread glories of the midnight sky. But I know that this is a life compounded of mistakes and miseries, of delusive pleasures and real wretchedness, of vice, terror, and uncertainty, a life which the most of men spend in estrangement from God, and in enmity with one another, and which the best have ever felt to be a weariness and a heavy load, and cried out, 'We loathe it; we would not live always.' The only real good on earth is virtue, and that is

not the result of life, but a communication from on high, and a pledge and foretaste of a better existence."

Foster felt far more forcibly than Johnson the glories of nature and the beauties of art. Inferior in learning, in critical acumen, and in dictatorial power over thought and language, he had a subtler, a more poetical, a more enthusiastic genius; this taught him to admire nature in all its forms with a deeper, although a pensive, admiration. He believed, with trembling, in the universe, on which he saw a shade resting like that of the morning of the first day of the Deluge. The ocean's voice seemed in his ear a wild wail, as if some maniac-god were imprisoned in its dreary caves, and were proclaiming his eternal wrongs to earth and the stars. The sun seemed looking on earth from his lofty car, with an air of supreme scorn and haughty reserve, and crying out, "What care I for that petty planet, and the reptile race my beams have generated in its mud—with their animalcular loves, hatreds, wars, fortunes, and faiths?" The moon seemed (as he describes her in a passage of his journal) to be contemplating our world with a melancholy interest, but the interest of one who had long given up the hope of doing any good to man, or of ever seeing him becoming better. And the stars appeared like the fiery spires and watch-towers of the walls of hell, surrounding the miseries of the earth with an aspect of fixed and far-off indifference. And yet, notwithstanding the gloomy discoloration in which he saw all these objects, he continued to admire them to enthusiasm. He sometimes reminds us of that band of fallen angels whom Milton describes exploring the distant regions of their place of pain, and imbibing a certain deep, though sullen joy, as they pass

"O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp."

So, Foster, deeming this universe little better than a vast hell, yet admitted it to be a most splendid one—all deluged and shining with a dreadful glory, which at once fascinated and terrified his soul.

As his religious views were of a sterner cast than Johnson's, so his views of man and of life were even darker than his. He also fell at times into deep abysses of doubt, from which, in general, Johnson kept free; and, unlike Johnson, he did not seek to snatch his share of the passing pleasures of the world, but held them in a scorn too deep even to taste their flavour as they hurried by. Both, however, seem to have come to the same conclusion on one momentous question—we mean the restoration of the lost. Foster has expressly defended this; and Johnson, in one of his conversations with Boswell, intimates a leaning towards it. We stay not to expose what we deem the fallacy of this hope. It seems far too good news to be true, as well as rendered excessively improbable by the aspects and phenomena of the present world. But, when contemplating the massive gloom which lay upon two such minds as Foster's and Johnson's, we are glad to find them getting partial relief even from a false dawning, although it only reminds us of the poet's words:—

"As northern lights the sky adorn,
And give the promise of a morn,
Which never comes to-day."

This is not the place for going at great length into the question as to the connection of religion with melancholy; yet we must be permitted a few remarks, as they are appropriate to Dr Johnson's case. And we think the whole truth may be summed up succinctly in a very few sentences. First, religion is not *necessarily* connected with a more than ordinary degree of gloom. There have been, and are, Christians habitually cheerful; that is, many persons inclined originally to look at the bright side of things have become Christians, and their piety has not lessened, but increased their pleasures; for, although it may have given them new sorrows, it has also multiplied and intensified their joys. But, secondly, there are many whose temperament, naturally bilious or nervous, when pervaded by Christian ideas, seems to become a shade darker; the thoughts of God's holiness, of the strictness of his law, of their own unworthiness, of the state of the world, and of the doom of sinners in a future state, press on them

with awful force, and render them all their lifetime subject to bondage. Thirdly, not a few Christians are exceedingly fluctuating in their emotions; their life is a balance, now sinking to the depths, and now soaring to the sun; and this is in them partly the result of temperament, and partly of their oscillations of religious feeling. Fourthly, if a Christian, as too many Christians do, neglect the natural conditions of cheerfulness, seclude himself from society, pay no attention to his health, and deny himself those innocent gratifications which fill agreeably up the intervals of duty, it is not his Christianity that will save him from inequality of spirits, or from fits of deep depression. Fifthly, it cannot be denied that a Christian has struggles, trials, temptations, and sources of spiritual sadness, peculiar to himself. His life is compared to a birth, to a warfare, to an agony. He is the special mark of many obloquies from men, and many secret assaults by invisible enemies; and has often to be contented with no other reward than is implied in the consciousness of integrity and of brave struggle, and in the hope of eternal life. Finally, he has often, like his fellows, to contend with afflictive providences, with poverty, and with the infirmities of his own temper or body. Nay, he may be more pressed by these than other men, and may thus seem more miserable than they, notwithstanding the secret solaces welling up within, and the glimpses of a glorious destiny seen hovering above him. We have at present two private Christians in view as illustrating the principles we have thus stated. Both belong to the excellent of the earth, and find the religion of Jesus dearer to them than their necessary food. But the one has been blessed with a benignant temper, an undisturbed serenity, been visited by few trials, and enjoyed an equable flow of health all his life. Hence he has been as happy as this state of being will permit; has been troubled with no doubts or misgivings, and hardly had his temper ruffled for a moment. The other has had a tone of health less firm, a nervous system more excitable, a temper more imperfect, an education more neglected, and a career more chequered; and has therefore been, on the whole, unhappy, morbid: and while his excellence is admitted by all who know him, he is evidently far from the possession of that blessed peace and calm which are possessed by the other, and seems never likely to reach them till recast in another mould, and admitted to a serener region.

Those entertain very false notions of Christianity who dream that, as soon as it is believed, it always operates as a charm, and creates around the believer a clear and constant heaven on earth. This idea has, we think, done much injury to the cause, disheartened many at the difficulties of the way, and sent back from the first slough they encountered not a few Pliables, who otherwise might have struggled on to glory. Preachers have dealt too much in rose-colours while painting the Christian life. They should remember, as Croly says in the preface to his sermons, "that our religion is a *manly* religion;' that it is to *men* emphatically that it calls. ("To you, O *men*, I call, and my voice is to the sons of *men;*") and that it never promises an uninterrupted course of happiness either within or without.

Dr Johnson's religion, after subtracting a good deal of superstitious nonsense, was—and latterly, especially—a true although a gloomy faith. His very terrors proved his greatness, and seemed, as Keats has it, "portioned to a giant nerve." His fear of ghosts, for instance, sprung from his intense belief in a spiritual world, and from his feeling of his own unworthiness to meet a purely spiritual nature. His fear of death arose from his profound and solemn conceptions of that immense Being he expected to see after it. The higher a mind rises, it has a wider view of the Great Supreme, and a proportionate feeling of awe towards him. A Lilliputian mind worships a comparatively Lilliputian Deity; a mind of giant stature has its idea of Deity prodigiously magnified, and its fear accordingly enhanced. Hence Johnson on his death-bed cried out, "I will take anything but inebriating substance, for I *wish* to present my soul to God unclouded." There is something sublime in the sight of this autocrat of letters, of one who, like John

Knox. never feared the face of man, bowed in terror before the powers of the world to come, and you think of that being in Milton (in *this* point we alone compare them), who feared no power in earth, hell, or heaven, except Death and Deity. When you see this powerful nature agitated by his peculiar fears, you are reminded of the Psalmist's words, "He toucheth the mountains, and they smoke." They stand in their granite strength unmoveable by all the efforts of all mankind; but whenever their Creator lays his lightest finger on them, they recognise his hand, and begin to tremble and to smoke.

Yet Johnson, while keenly alive to the terrors of the law, and too much attached to outward forms, was not altogether ignorant of the consolations of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The peculiarities of that gospel became dearer to him as his life advanced. On his death-bed he recommended to a friend a volume of sermons, because it dwelt most fully on the doctrine of a propitiation. The Cross shone out at last amid the vapours which had lain on him, and he saw in it the pillar of the divine government, the mirror of the divine character, the finger pointing up to a father's house, and the mighty magnet drawing men home there from their vain and various wanderings. It did not, indeed, remove all his darkness, or that of this system, but it "allured to brighter worlds," and seemed to bear inscribed above the head of its bleeding victim the words, "What thou knowest not now thou shalt know hereafter." And as it rose in its clear command above earth, and death, and hell, his dreams about the efficacy of fastings and the other superstitions he had imbibed in his childhood faded away; a portion of his fears vanished with them, and he fell asleep at last, a forgiven and accepted child, perfect through suffering, in the arms of his Redeemer.

Johnson had fallen into occasional errors of life, hinted at rather than disclosed by Boswell, which prevent him from being proposed as a model. His physical system, it should be remembered, was radically diseased, his passions were excessively strong, and nothing but his own acquired self-command, and the grace of God, prevented him from becoming a moral wreck, as conspicuous and lamentable as Savage, Burns, or Byron. But he was nevertheless, and the more from the struggle which he had to maintain with his temperament, one of the noblest of human beings, and in nothing so much so as in his deference to the claims of Christianity. If any man of that age might, strong in the pride of intellectual power, have refused to bend and to become as a little child, it might have been this sturdy Titan, and yet he not only knelt himself, but taught thousands to kneel beside him, who, but for the example of so great a man, would have disdained the homage.

The name of Johnson as a critic has had a somewhat fluctuating history. Once rated too high, it is now, we think, pushed far below its level. The true way to describe his criticism is to say it is the criticism of gigantic but cramped common sense. He lacks that subtler instinct which detects minute beauties, and that *recherché* taste which distinguishes the virtue of secret flavours of excellence. Nor has he any principles of criticism entitled to the praise of depth, comprehensiveness, or originality. He takes up a book with a feeling compounded of eagerness and reluctance; devours it in hasty gulps; becomes aware of all its principal faults, and its broader beauties; throws it down, to lift it up no more; and proceeds, some twenty years perhaps afterwards, to daguerreotype the results of the one hasty and hungry perusal. *That* is generally faithful to his original feelings, for his memory is a *vice* (in both senses of the word, shall we say!) but it is not always, any more than *these*, just to the book. One reading (and Johnson rarely honoured a book by reading it twice) is seldom a sufficient warrant for a criticism. Perhaps the critic reads the work in a state of bodily irritation or mental pain. Perhaps, while he is reading it, his thoughts and heart are a thousand miles away; or perhaps his stomach is foul; or perhaps he has risen from a sleepless night; or perhaps he is waiting for the advent of a friend, or has just been reading the abuse

of an enemy; or he cannot, in short, tell how—but his critical "hand is out," and his critical appetite is either entirely dulled or unhealthily sharpened; and thus, in various ways, his judgments may be rendered worthless.

Dr Johnson being peculiarly a man of moods—often in low depressions, often in towering passions, often shaken by pain, and often drowsed by indolence—his criticisms require, more than of most writers, to be taken *cum grano salis*. He never, indeed, plays us false; he is always desirous to be faithful, but seems often working with imperfect materials, and rather struggling to form, than calmly expressing, a judgment. Macaulay has been grossly unjust to Johnson's criticisms on poetry, and compares him to Rymer, who is, he truly says, "the worst critic of poetry that ever existed." But, although Johnson is not the best of poetic critics, he is very far from being comparable to the worst. The great test we propose to a critic on poetry is—to be a poet himself. Now, Johnson was himself a poet; we do not say of the highest order. He never could have written a "Macbeth," or a "Comus," or a "Rime of the Ancient Mariner." He had not the power of *consecutive* poetic invention and combination; but his "Rasselas," his "Vultures," and a hundred other apologues and essays in his works, prove that he had genuine poetic imagination as well as feeling, and that, under that purblind vision and shaggy frame, there lurked the soul of a "Maker." Many of the lines, too, in "London," the "Vanity of Human Wishes," and those he contributed to Goldsmith's "Traveller," are truly poetical. And when we turn to his criticism, we find a great deal of a very noble character—massive as marble, and clear as crystal. The "Lives of the Poets" have been subjected to much obloquy, as well as larded with much undue praise, but have not as yet, we think, been fairly appreciated. Now, in the first place, it has often been objected to them that they omit three of the greatest of all our poets —Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspere. But this was not Dr Johnson's fault, but that of the booksellers for whom he wrote, who, we suppose, excluded Chaucer from their list on account of his obsolete spelling and language—Spenser, for the unwieldy size of his poem—and Shakspere, because his poetry, so called, was *then* counted unworthy of his genius. These reasons, whether right or wrong, were *their* reasons, and not suggested, or perhaps approved of, by him. It has been objected, again, that his book has eternised the memory of many men who were mere poetasters. Johnson here, again, did in general the bidding of his taskmasters, as all such Ariels must obey the behests of their Prosperos till the day of their deliverance arrive. When Boswell asked if he would allow the names of blockheads to be added to the series, he replied, "Yes, and tell the world that they are blockheads." And so, in effect, he has done to such dull dogs as Walsh, Smith, Duke, King, and the rest. He disdains to worry them at length, but lifts them up, as a Newfoundland dog does a cur of low degree, and pops them, with quiet contempt, into the waters. His praise of Blackmore has been adduced against him, by those who have been unable to perceive the vein of irony which pervades that life, and which more effectually damns the poetry of the unlucky knight than the witty wrath of Gay and all the authors associated with him prevailed to do. He respected, indeed, Blackmore for his probity and piety, and praised with evident sincerity one of his poems—that on the "Creation"—but so did honest Matthew Henry (who gives great screeds of it in his Commentary), and so did as great a man as even Johnson, John Locke. A more formidable objection has been made to his "Lives," on account of his treatment of Milton. Here we cannot defend him. His hatred to the Puritans, and to Milton as a man, amounted to fury and malignant madness. On such subjects he raved, and boiled over with rage. But let us remember that Milton himself ransacked the kennel for epithets to express his contempt, disgust, and loathing of his enemies. He assailed them in the tenderest points, and dragged to light the details of their private history. In this he erred;

but we cannot wonder that his error should be used as a precedent by the most formidable of his later foes. The differences, too, between Johnson and Milton were so great, that it was impossible for the one to do full justice to the other. These have been admirably pointed out by Dr Channing, who shows how, while Milton was of ethereal race, Johnson was only the strongest of earth-born Titans; so that in the Life you have Raphael criticised by Polyphemus. But Milton, although an angel, was a "*giant*-angel." And hence Johnson, from his sympathy with all that is great and colossal, is compelled to praise him. It is not his ethereality he admires, it is his vastness. Had he been simply a "stripling cherub," he would have underrated and abused him —treating him as a mere winged ephemeron, dancing in the departing light of a summer day. And hence he has undervalued his minor poems—his "Sonnets," his "Lycidas," and his "Comus"—not so much for what they are in themselves, as for their inferiority to that scale of magnitude according to which he would like to see a Milton working. He cried out to Hannah More, "Milton, madam, can cut out a Colossus from a rock, but not carve heads upon cherry-stones." Hence his breath of praise is all husbanded for "Paradise Lost," and when he reaches that poem, it comes out in a torrent of manly eulogium. The praise of an enemy is not only more valuable, but very often more eloquent, than that of a friend. When we look with admiration on a foe, we look *through tears*. A certain softness, and a certain swelling emotion of heart, generally accompany the tribute; —produced partly by a latent remorse for previous injustice, partly by a quick sense of our own generosity, and partly by a foresight of the effect of our panegyric upon the party praised, or on his friends. So with Johnson on Milton's "Paradise Lost." Not to be compared critically with some other tributes, morally it excels them all. You see a great man discerning his own quality of mind displayed on a grander scale, by one whom he personally hates, and crying out with irresistible impulse, with sudden and soft-eyed enthusiasm, "Magnificent—the more that the man is my foe." A sight like this reaches the sublime; for, although it may be said to be the result of compulsion, it is a compulsion which could only be produced by the influence of power on power, and reminds you of that eternal law by which a Jupiter is bound to revolve around a Sun, through the force of mere superior magnitude—although the planet is a mass of clouds and snowy ice, and the sun a ball of fire.

The gay and gallant figure of Murat as he rushed into the opposite ranks, as if to grasp the hand of Death, and lead him down a measure on a bloody ball-room, is said to have excited from the Cossacks cries of admiration. When O'Connell rose into his altitudes in the House of Commons, Peel and Disraeli, we are told, sometimes dropped their pencils, and gazed in fascinated admiration at the orator, with his wondrous words, and still more wondrous attitudes and tones. And so, to compare great to comparatively small things, when Milton soars "above all Greek and Roman fame," and talks the large utterance of the early gods, Johnson is forced to throw away his measuring-rule, to stifle the sneer on his lip, and brush away the frown from his brow; and lo! the critic is sublimated into the man and the poet.

Another objection to Johnson's "Lives" is the way in which he has criticised Gray, Collins, Akenside, Churchill, and some other contemporary poets. And here, again, we admit that he has partly exposed himself to the censure of his critics. His account of Collins is, we confess, miserably meagre. The fact was, that he seems, by an unconscious act of the mind, to have transferred his pity for the fate and his disapprobation of the personal habits of the poor bard to his poetry; which, besides, with all its ideal and exquisite beauties, wants entirely that strength of thought, that manliness of purpose, and that solid magnitude of structure, which alone were able to overpower objections, and to storm Johnson into admiration. In reference to Gray, again, he was right in his criticism on the "Bard" and the

"Progress of Poetry," which seem to most now stiff and laborious exaggerations—mere mimicries of real power, trying to do by effort what can only be done by magic; the poet spurring a large and clumsy dray-horse, instead of Pegasus. To the "Elegy written in a Country Churchyard," he does ample justice. The only one of Gray's poems which he rates below its real value is the delightful "Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College." One of his objections is exceedingly trifling and unfair. He says, "His supplication to Father Thames, to tell him who drives the hoop or tosses the ball, is useless and puerile: Father Thames has no better means of knowing than himself." This is sad work; the more so, as, in "Rasselas," Johnson himself had apostrophised the Nile as the "Great Father of Waters," and asked him if he swept through any country in which he did not hear the language of distress! Critics, like liars, should have good memories. His account of Akenside is perhaps a little under-coloured, but cannot be called unjust. He commends him for "great felicity of genius, and uncommon amplitude of acquisition," and blames him for luxuriance and superfluity of words. Akenside was far too diffuse to be a strong poet, although he has some very nervous lines; such as—

"Or yoked with whirlwinds and the northern blast,
Sweeps the long tract of day;"

and hence Johnson, not finding either that sturdy strength or that concise elegance in the "Pleasures of Imagination" which he desiderated in poetry, is disappointed. To Akenside's "Epistle to Curio," he gives liberal praise. In reference to Churchill, what we have said about Collins was far more true. Johnson, strongly condemning the conduct of the poet, is led to be severe on his verses. But for this, he must have admired the rough readiness, the daring self-assertion, the Drydenic rapidity, and ease of execution, and sinewy English, of this remarkable but unhappy poet.

Johnson's criticisms on Shakspere have been also laid to his charge. That he thoroughly understood the "myriad-minded," that his mind was oceanic enough to fill every creek and cranny of that mighty channel, we doubt; but what other mind was, is, or ever shall be? The purely fanciful and imaginative parts of Shakspere—his subtler touches—his frequent delicacy and grace—his healthy, genial tone—and his all-embracing catholicity—were not at all to Johnson's taste; he durst not abuse, but he did not understand or sympathise with them. It was, as in reference to Milton—the might of Shakspere he admired—that power he possessed over the passions—the grasp he takes of the broader elements of human nature—his resemblance to a Genie of the "Arabian Nights," in his swiftness and supernatural strength, that called up blood into Johnson's faded cheek and fire into his dim eye. And the lines in his well-known "Prologue" express Shakspere's *magical* might better than any other writer has done:—

"Each change of many-colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new.
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain."

When he came down from this general estimate of the demoniac force that was in Shakspere, and of its stupendous results, to the examination of particular plays, and the dissection of particular characters, he was less successful. It was with his mental as with his bodily eyesight. He saw great broad outlines, but not minute details. When, in Scotland, a mountain rose before him, he was aware of a vast rugged mass towering into the blue sky with sharp, distinct pinnacles, but not of the beautiful ferns climbing and softening its sides, of the vivid grasses betraying the source of secret springs, or of the young pines bending at the base their blue-green cones in homage to the spirit of the hill. And thus Shakspere loomed before Johnson's eye a form of indefinite shape but enormous outline and bulk, although he was too far off to notice the delicate and lovely lineaments which soften his strength into beauty, and prove him no monster of Briarean race, but simply the greatest, as well as one of the gentlest, of the sons of men.

We feel a little nervous when approaching the subject of Johnson and Ossian's Poems. Yet let us say what we think, and dare the consequences. Macpherson then, we fear, *was* Ossian, or at least has certainly shown himself to be a much cleverer fellow than the old Blind Bard in whom the Highlands have claimed their only poet. His work, like Pope's "Iliad," if it be not the original, is something better. It has indeed much monotony and much repetition, and a fair amount of bombast and falsetto, but rises often into real sublimity, and often melts into melodious pathos. Dr Johnson's hatred to it may be explained by his aversion to Scotland, by his detestation for what he deemed a fraud, and by his prejudice against all unrhymed poetry, whether it was blank verse or rhythmical prose. Dear, nevertheless, to every Scottish heart will for ever remain those beautiful fragments. In spite of Dr Johnson's criticism, and the more insolent one of Macaulay, they will continue to hear in the monotony of the strain the voice of the mountain torrent, and the roar of the tempest; in its abruptness they will see the beetling crag and the shaggy summit of the bleak Highland hill; in its bombast and obscurity they will recognise the hollows of the deep glens, and the mists which shroud the cataracts; in its happier and nobler measures they will welcome sounds of poetry worthy of the murmur of their lochs and the waving of their old woods, and never will they see Ben Nevis looking down over his clouds, or Loch Lomond basking amidst its sunny braes, or in grim Glencoe listen to the Cona singing her lonely and everlasting dirge beneath Ossian's cave, which gashes the breast of the cliff above it, without remembering the glorious shade from whose evanishing lips Macpherson has extracted the wild music of his mountain song.

Probably the greatest error, after all, committed by Johnson as a critic, is the prodigious liking he has to Dryden and Pope, and the preference he gives them above Young and Thomson, if not above Milton and Shakspere themselves. That Dryden and Pope were true poets, and that the latter was in many respects an exquisite artist, we dare not deny. But that in nature, in genius—in that power which creates, which throws out masses of molten ore—they attain either to the measure of the author of the "Seasons" or of the "Night Thoughts," we venture, in common with most critics now, to doubt. Yet Johnson sums up the life of Thomson in a few pages, scarcely noticing his "Castle of Indolence," and hands over that of Young to the portentous puppy Herbert Croft, to be executed in a bad mimicry of his own worst manner; while he expends all his strength, learning, and eloquence in praising Dryden and Pope, and contrives to make their lives the most masterly critical essays which his pen ever produced. We can understand his sympathy with Dryden, for *he* possessed that masculine strength which Johnson always admitted, and had a careless greatness somewhat resembling his own. But his profound wonder at, and worship of, the mechanical miracles and artificial harmonies of Pope are to us amazing. We could as soon have expected to have seen him adoring a puppet or bowing before "Punch." The reasons may be—he found Pope's style in fashion; Pope had been a patron of his; and perhaps also he wanted to mortify the Whigs, by exalting him above Addison. Having no real ear besides for versification, he seems actually to have preferred the eternal dropping and regular ding-dong of Pope, to the more varied and more musical measures of higher poets. He liked, too, Pope's exquisite sense and wit, and was right in this; but was not right in exalting him on these accounts to the highest poetic pedestal.

His attack on sacred poetry has been often assailed. The fallacy of it lies in his forgetting that, though poetry cannot *heighten* the Divine, it can *raise us* up toward a perception of it. It was strange that Dr Johnson forgot that the highest poetry *had* been sacred—that of the Bible, of Dante, and of Milton. But the eloquence and power of writing in the passage are transcendent. Never does he run with such rapidity as when he is running wrong.

The two best "Lives," as narratives, in the book are those of Savage and of Isaac Watts. The first is a romance in interest, as well as most masterly in composition; the second is remarkable for its fine tone of feeling, and its thorough sympathy with moral and religious worth. It is singular how he tells best the lives of the greatest sinner and of the greatest saint in his catalogue. It is as if a writer now-a-days should publish biographies of modern poets, and should shine most in those of Byron and James Montgomery. The explanation lies in this—Johnson had once lived like Savage, and he was always aspiring to live like Watts.

In closing this paper, we are deeply impressed with the conviction that Johnson has never fully displayed the riches of his mind. He has written so well as to start the suggestion that he might have written better. All his works are desultory. They consist of little papers, little apologues, short poems, and short lives. There is no one massive whole on which you can lay your hand and say, Here is a full reflection of the giant man! It is the same, as we have said before, still to a more tantalising degree, with Johnson's great contemporary, Burke. Who can read those pregnant pages of his, so crowded with thought, fancy, genius, and not regret that the most powerful thinker his age produced had not stooped to become by practice its finest writer, and had not left some more unique and colossal monument of his powers? So far from Burke being a barbarous writer, he was often one of the most elegant; indeed, he was, after all, the most elegant and correct in style of all our great original thinkers, and needed only leisure for revisal and polish, to have equalled Addison in grace, and Hall in dignity and transparent purity of diction. We were amused the other day, while glancing at Irving's "Life of George Buchanan," with the following clause in a sentence, which we quote, as containing about as much nonsense as could well be crammed into the same compass:—"The elegant yet diffuse rhapsodies of Burke and Bolingbroke, to the correct and classical precision of Junius or Hume." We never read Bolingbroke, and perhaps his writing is here fairly characterised; but to call Burke a rhapsodical and diffuse writer is egregiously absurd. His writings absolutely swarm, like an ant-hill, with thought. No writer has left so many poignant and pointed sentences. *Every* sentence in his works is either distended with a thought or starred with an image. Even those splendid bursts which this writer is pleased to call rhapsodies are all interpenetrated and solidified by the most subtle reflection, and all help to carry on the main and mighty stress of his argument. On the other hand, Hume is one of the least correct of writers, and the least precise. The charm of his writing lies in its conversational ease and abandonment, and in certain careless but inimitable touches, which moved, we remember, the envy and despair of Gibbon. As to Junius, many think *he* was Burke; and one great objection to this theory is, that, although his language be equally precise, his thought is so much less abundant and profound.

We linger as we look back on that interesting period in our literary history, when old Johnson and Burke held high discourse and keen rencontre together; when there was still some rule in our republic of letters, and not the wretched anarchy which at present prevails; when courtesy, candour, and kindly feeling dwelt in the breast of one of the two chiefs of intellect, and fearless honesty, magnanimity, and rough warm heart distinguished the other; when criticism had not yet become a mere craft, and that not of the most honourable kind; and above all, when our dictators in the realm of letters were not ashamed to avow themselves believers in God, and humble disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well may we, sick of the present, turn to the past, and pray, with more fervour than faith, that these days may return again.

JOHN FOSTER.

FIRST SITTING.

"THE Essay," wrote a bookseller to a friend of the author, "is a species of composition for which there is now little demand." And there cannot be a doubt that the sagacious bibliopole spoke the result of his experience, though to account for the fact might not a little have puzzled his acuteness. Why is it that this once most popular and delightful kind of literature, with all its slipshod ease and fireside graces, has died with Elia, or, if alive, preserves only a precarious and rickety existence? Why, while treatise, poem, tragedy, speech, sermon, in short, every other kind of literary composition, preserves its pristine and palmy honours, have essays and epics gone together to the sepulchre? Why, while the classics in this department retain their proper niche in the library, and are read with eagerness and delight by those who go rather farther back in their literary researches than Nickleby and Jack Sheppard, is no one ambitious of adding to their number; of treading that quiet path where Addison, and Steele, and Franklin, and Hunt, and Lamb, have walked before; of recasting their limited, but magic circle; swaying their tiny, but potent rod; emulating their nameless, but numberless graces—their good-nature, their elegant raillery, their conversational ease, their fine shiftings to and fro, from tender sportiveness to sportive pathos, or their varied and idiomatic style? Nay, who, though ambitious of this, could find a fit audience, if he found an audience at all? Is it that the cast of mind, of which the essay was the delicate offshoot, has disappeared from among men? Or is it that the essay is a kind of vegetable mule, like that from certain flowers, which can be propagated to a limited extent, but which, in the long run, dies away from lack of masculine vigour and real root in the literary herbarium? Or is it that the public has, from mere wantonness and caprice, "made a point," as poor Goldsmith has it, to read essays no more, however excellent in themselves? We think the cause lies somewhat deeper; though, after all, it is not very far from the surface. The essay was always a sort of literary light-horsemanship. It neither tested the highest powers of mind, nor did it propose to itself the noblest and profoundest purposes. Cast in a medium between the formality of a treatise and the carelessness of a letter, it wanted the satisfactory completeness of the one, and the confidential charm of the other. It was suited eminently to an indolent and easy-minded age, like that on whose breakfast-tables shone the "Tattlers," the "Spectators," and the "Guardians." For the amusement of the big-wigged and luxurious generation of Queen Anne, the essay was as admirably adapted as the sofa, that paradise of the parlour. In the days of the Miltons, the Vanes, and the Seldens, it would have attracted no more notice than the flutter of an ephemeron's wings. The idea is ludicrous of Cromwell lounging over a number of the "Adventurer," or of Milton's daughter reading to him the account of the Club of little men. That age of high intellects, of strong and stormy passions, of deep religious purpose, was an age for Areopagiticas, not essays. Their light and elegant structure was better fitted for an age of French dress, small intrigue, modish manners, quiet, not keen, literary tastes, perfect politeness, and profound internal peace;—when, for Cromwells, we had Bolingbrokes; for Miltons, Popes; for Seldens, Steeles; for goblets bubbling with royal blood, cups and saucers brimful of the innocent novelty of tea! And it was clear that, if a more earnest and enthusiastic period were ever to dawn, the beautiful but somewhat flimsy pinions of the essay would be scorched in its radiance. It turned out as might have been expected. The French Revolution threw down, *en passant*, the old landmarks of literatures, changed the very style of the world, which began to heave and hurry,

as if the hands of the writers were shaken by an earthquake, and to glow as if with a reflection of the furnace heat of the surrounding excitement, and for the essay substituted the review, a far more pliable and powerful instrument. Since, various attempts have been made to revive that faded form of writing; and, unquestionably, in the "Round Table" of Hazlitt, the "Indicator" and "Companion" of Hunt, and the "Reflector" and "Elia" of Lamb, we find many of the graces and much of the spirit of our elder essayists, blended with a deeper insight and a warmer imagination; but still the age of essays, as of chivalry, is too obviously gone. In reviews, we have not essays, but dissertations. In magazines, their place is supplied by tales and sketches. In the pages of our cheap literature, they still partially survive. The truth is, our age is not sufficiently at its ease to relish the essay. It is too much occupied in devouring newspapers, glancing over reviews, bolting novels, and tearing out the heart of treatises of mechanical science, to read, as it runs, such short, delicate, and refined productions. To be taught or to be amused, to probe practical questions to the bottom or to be lapped over head and ears in dreams of romance, is the tendency of the popular taste at present. The essay answers but indifferently any of these ends. And if ever, as is possible, we shall see it restored to its former, and more than its former, popularity, we must first see the public mind in a less excited, a less eager, and a more equable frame.

The subject of the following sketch was generally known as Foster the Essayist. But, in truth, the title was a misnomer. For his tone, style, purpose, beauties, and faults, alike marked him out from the ordinary herd of essayists, and from the gay writers of Queen Anne and their imitators. Indeed, it is not easy to say to what precise species of composition his extraordinary productions belong. They are not sermons, though they have much of the sermonising vehemence, earnestness, and oracularity. They are not treatises, yet are elaborate, lengthy, and exhaustive. They are hardly essays, though they bear the name, and have much point, brilliance, and sarcastic wit. Part of them profess to be letters to a friend; but all are greatly deficient in epistolary ease and grace. They are of the composite order of intellectual architecture; and, as such, require a severer criticism than the common run of essays; but one less rigid than would be requisite for works of greater pretensions and prouder name.

John Foster was, unquestionably, an original man. He had as distinct a faculty of seeing everything through his own medium as any writer of his day. Were the medium dim or party-coloured, as it sometimes was, or were it vivid and lustrous, it was always his own. Authors, characters, books, the face of nature, were all seen and shown by him in a new, strange, and striking light. "He read the universe, not by sunlight, nor starlight, nor moonlight, but just by the fairy lustre round his own head." His thought had a stamp about it altogether his own. With no air of affected singularity, with no desperate efforts at solving the inscrutable and sounding the fathomless, with little metaphysical verbiage, and with few carefully wrapped up commonplaces, his train of thinking ever sought the profound as its natural element. A necessity was laid upon his mind not to think shallowly, or like other men: and even when he did bring up half truths, or whole errors, like seaweed instead of coral, there was something in its very worthlessness which spoke of the depths, and betrayed the vigour and wind of the diver. He was one of the few writers, in an age of mystification, whose obscurities were entirely involuntary and unassumed—neither formed by the imitation of false models, nor by personal affectation, but by the necessities of his intellect, or the peculiarities of a style which was sometimes an insufficient organ to his thought. His thinking was not that of the mere metaphysician, nor of the mere "logical grindmill," nor of the mere poet, nor of the mere theologian; it was that of a mind at once acute, imaginative, and tinctured with a solemn and peculiar piety. His defects as

a thinker were as essential as his merits; they were an occasional one-sidedness of view, an habitual preference for the gloomy side of things, a morbidity of moral thinking, and a dark estimate of human character. The force and comprehensiveness of his intellect were injured, too, not only by the party influences of one of the straitest sects of our religion, but by the limitation of his knowledge, which was apparently not proportionate to his powers. And your surprise was, that with such schoolboy resources his mind could do so much; that, with a plaything for a club, this brawny Hercules could work such wonders of energetic thinking. He had of course read much and variedly. Still you missed that indescribable something, connected with a thoroughly learned mind, those far-flashing allusions, that general rich result in style and imagery, of a most multifarious scholarship, which charms us in Burke and in De Quincey. Had he been as ripe and good a scholar as he was a vigorous and eloquent thinker, he would probably have occupied a still higher place in the literary firmament.

Foster's style, like his thought, was his own. And in saying this, we state its principal, not its only merit. It was not periodic, measured, or elaborately polished; its sentences were of all lengths, and of all shapes—sometimes extremely short, and often straggling along whole pages; now and then beautifully simple, but generally complicated and perplexed. It was a bony, muscular, masculine style, solid as iron, yet richly set with massive ornament, reminding us often in its rough sublimity of old John Scott, who wrote the "Christian Life," though it never reached that author's higher raptures, which, like the "old poets, are all air and fire."

Its defects were very obvious—its involution, its slow and cumbrous march, its unwieldy periods, grappling together huge masses of thought, its curious combination of some of the worst faults of sermon-writing, with some of the worst in epistolary style, and a certain barbarous dissonance, betokening the want of a fine ear, and murdering the music of almost all his periods. We were always struck with the difficulty and iron toil with which he manifestly expressed his thoughts. The task of Sisyphus was a joke, compared to the "labour dire and weary wo" with which this very able man, and rather voluminous author, composed to the last. Language with him was no delicate Ariel, but a drudging Caliban, doing the behests of his magic mind with slow and unconquerable reluctance. The effort, however, was of an interesting kind. It did not resemble the spasmodic struggle of mediocrists to dive into depths beyond their reach, nor the throes of the highest order of poetic genius to bring forth its giant progeny, nor the difficulty of retired and recluse students to seize, detain, and fix down their thoughts. It was a difficulty not in fashioning full-grown conceptions within, but in giving them form and pressure on the written page. We mark this strange struggle particularly in his "Essay on Popular Ignorance," where he gasps and tosses about in a sea of gloomy speculation and unruly words.

The tone of Foster's mind and the cast of his writing were exceedingly sombre. Some gay and brilliant passages occur. Little sunny spots lie at intervals, like patches of summer green amid forests of pine. Curlings of a playful humour pass transiently over his lips; veins of sarcasm are disclosed here and there; but a mood of abstraction, of dark investigation, and of awful piety, lies like a shadow over all his works, and tinges the soul of his reader with the same sad and solemn hue. From the shades of early scepticism, he passed into another, though a tenderer and holier darkness. In this respect, he resembles Dr Johnson more than any other writer. Even the gospel gave but a troubled gladness to Foster's spirit. By a strange instinct, he turned away from Goshen, to the surrounding and impervious darkness, and brooded with painful yet pious feelings under its sable canopy. The inscrutable decrees of God, the existence and the ravages of moral evil in this fair universe, the secrets of the place of punishment, the evils of ignorance, the abuses of talent—such subjects possessed for him a

dreary attraction, and drew him irresistibly toward the centre of these abysses of gloomy meditation, which they now open, and now seem to shut with violence in the face of the inquirer. No writer of this age has described so well the majesty of moral darkness, the horrors of idolatry pressing down ages and continents under its demoniacal domination, the evils of perverted power, of national infatuation, and of national ignorance. And no one has ever turned a more reverent, yet a more eager and imploring eye, toward those ultimate questions which are folded up in their own inscrutability. No one has hung with such anxious steps and beseeching looks around the confines of that mystery which envelops us on every side; the problem of all ages, the origin of evil, lies like a tangible weight on his mind, which it agitates to an injurious and distressing degree. When speaking, in his critical estimate of Robert Hall, of those whose very devotion is endangered by such speculations, he had manifestly himself in his eye. Not that he was less pious on this account—far from it—but his religion caught from such cogitations a cast and colour of its own, and became a light shining amid darkness. The text "God is love," was no text for him; God a consuming fire, earth a wilderness of sin, masses of human beings hurried by the grasp of moral destroyers off this into a darker stage, "the whole of human hopes, and wishes, and efforts, and projects, brought down in a long abortive series, by the torrent of ages, to be lost in final despair;" such subjects incessantly recurred, and were treated in a style so far removed from vulgar fanaticism, cowardly complaint, or blasphemous objurgation —in a style so mournful, yet so submissive—as at once to depress and elevate, to sadden and sublimate, the mind of his reader.

Perhaps, after all, his *forte* lay in his microscopic observation of human character. Through his caustic and severe humour, as through a lens of subtlest power, he saw into the marrow of man, and his hand was as firm to dissect, as his vision was piercing to see. Possessing almost the insight of a Fielding into the tortuosities of motive, he turned it to a very different account. The heart was the true field of Foster's power, and deep his knowledge of its vagaries, its self-deceptions, its devious windings, its vain ambitions, the varying shades which make up the blackness of its darkness. Perhaps he errs in the excessive refinement of his scrutiny, is too stern and sinister in his inferences, makes too little allowance for that tremendous press of tendency to evil, in which, the while, he so firmly believes, exaggerates the darker hues, is too rapid and uniform in his generalisation of character, and flourishes too exultingly the knife, by which he "pierces to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart." We believe that the same searching power which distinguished the author marked the man, and have heard of those who knew him, while testifying abundantly to his amiable and unassuming deportment, confessing that they have sometimes trembled at the weight of piercing silent scrutiny, like that of a spirit, which his looks told was involuntarily brought to bear upon themselves.

His first essays are the best, and also the most popular, of his productions. Perhaps, after Hall's exquisite criticism (one giant hand of genius held forth to welcome another), it may be presumptuous to pass any verdict on those very racy and original productions. They were written to the lady of his love, who stirred him up to produce a work which would prove him to the world, what she knew him to be, a man of genius. This roused his sluggish spirit. It awoke in its strength, and sank not down into congenial indolence, till it had secured a bride, and made itself immortal! But such love-letters! Compared to ordinary ones, they resemble the stupendous missives of Brobdignagian swains, when put beside the penny-post productions of the lovers in Lilliput. They have no pretty nonsense; no fine-spun compliments; no high-flown gallantry; no lisping tenderness. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand females could not have understood them. But

they were addressed to a kindred spirit—a mind little inferior to Foster's own—and which inhabited a frame, high, cold, pale, beautiful, and majestic—like a statue; but, as he himself complained, "like a statue, too, surrounded by an iron railing," which it required these essays to break down. Alas! some time ere his own departure, she, before whom he laid the first powerful productions of his intellect, and whose smiles he won by the sheer force of his intellect, became a cold corpse. The essays are more than worthy of the inspiration. In reading them, we feel like one who, travelling over a dull champaign, is suddenly let down into a mine of gold; or it is a pleasure like that of the heroine of the "Revolt of Islam," who is carried by a "diver, lean and strong," down amid the glories, the "mighty shapes, and mightier shadows," of a coral sea. The contrast between the dull and sickening sameness, the tame or turgid language, the cautious, creeping, or silly and ranting tone of ordinary religious literature, and the energy, the freshness, boldness, and grandeur, of the author of the "Essay on Decision of Character," is immense. It is an eagle intermingling with a dance of twilight bats. It is a trumpet sounding suddenly amid a twang of jews'-harps. It is the ship of Heaven, described by Southey, shell-shaped, rigged with a rainbow, coloured with the green light of evening, bearing away boldly for the Swerga from amongst a batch of river craft, which are creeping along the shore. That these figures do not too strongly express the difference, will be admitted by every one who knows the state of religious literature at the time these essays appeared, or is capable of appreciating the vast *toto cœlo* distinction between the cold, narrow, illiterate mode of presenting the truths of Christianity which then prevailed, and the new, brilliant, and firmamental light, which the genius of Foster has poured around them.

"On Decision of Character" has been the most popular of the four essays; though, in passages, we think inferior to any of the rest. It abounds in illustrations, many of them taken from the most commonplace classical sources, but all steeped in the author's native originality, and all subservient to his main end. Foster is essentially a moralist—indeed the last specimen of that class who have occupied the border-ground between literature and theology—and, though not so elegant as Addison, nor so sonorous as Johnson, he is the expounder of as profound a wisdom, and of a nobler, stricter, more ethereal, and more Christian ethics. If effect be a test of true power, this essay meets it as effectually as anything we know within the same compass. We have heard of those whose wavering inclinations it has fixed, whose scattered faculties it has condensed into one deep purpose—who have risen from its perusal "sadder and wiser" men, pledged as by a sacrament to a more consistent, independent, and energetic course of existence. Perhaps he overrates the force of a determined intellect. He frequently, indeed, protests against its abuse, yet he so much admires and ardently eulogises the quality itself, as to give it a dangerous prominence, and to wreath round it a seductive charm. There can be no question, that, while decision of character, in a virtuous spirit, is beneficial in the highest degree, it becomes, in a vicious character, the source and centre of immense evil. But Foster, in teaching us to idolise this quality, teaches us in effect, though not in intention, to regard it as a blind to errors, and an excuse for enormities which are distinguished by a daring decision. For one Howard or Whitfield, there have been a hundred Catilines and Bonapartes. Decision of character, in short, is not strictly a moral power, and it is extremely dangerous to pay that homage to any intellectual quality which is sacred to virtue alone.

The essay "On a Man's Writing Memoirs of Himself" has always been our chief favourite among Foster's writings. Less finished in execution, and less sustained in mere style, than the former, it has a far deeper energy of thinking, and rises in parts to an overwhelming sublimity and awfulness of tone. Who has forgot his demonstration, in a few sentences, of the folly and presumption of the atheist (or rather, to use Dr Chalmers's distinction,

of the antitheist, who would deny the very possibility of a Supreme Being), conveying to him a rebuke as if from the chambers of the thunder? We admire, too, in this essay the deep side glances into the core of human nature; the fierce bitterness of sarcasm which tinges many of its sentences, and repays with rich interest the scoff of profane witlings; the profound earnestness which pervades it, and the peculiar freshness of its originality, like the taste of virgin honey, or the smell of a strong soil turned up by the plough. Some passages, too, are written in a style of plaintive tenderness, and many of his thoughts flower into poetry. "Where," he asks of the aged man, "are all those vernal fancies which once had so much power to touch the heart? They died like the singing birds of that time, which now sing no more."

The essay "On the term Romantic" is not as a whole successful. It is an attempt, with what seems a total waste of force, to transpierce those bright bubbles which arise in young and visionary minds, and which are sure but too speedily to fall asunder of themselves. There is little risk of the world ever becoming over romantic. And is not the sport cruel which singles out for savage chase those innocent illusions, which, if they do sometimes veil the real responsibilities, more frequently disguise the real calamities of existence? In fact, it is not worth while. No use of throwing a great stone among the bonny bells which arise in their brief beauty on the surface of the mountain pool. They will soon sink into the black abyss whence they rose. One passage, however, on the absurdity of Utopian schemes for the regeneration of the world, is written with much energy, and a certain mournful grandeur, which nearly melt us to tears. Various projects, aspiring each to the character of the true panacea, pass in review before the stern observer, who keenly eyes, briefly questions, and dismisses them with the waive of summary disdain. His verdict is sometimes, we fear, too harsh and hasty, and he does but bare justice to the benevolence and self-sacrifice which shine through the worst of those schemes; and, though we cordially agree with him in thinking that the help of the world must in the main come from above, and be wrought out by means as independent of human forethought as the "rising of the sun," we plead guilty to a lurking tenderness for those sincere enthusiasts, typified by the heroic Knight of La Mancha, who have sought, often by tears, and tortures, and blood, to stanch the wounds of this "poor terrestrial citadel of man." We cannot, in a world so selfish as this, afford to sacrifice the disinterestedness, self-devotion, and honesty to be found in the annals of projectorism, even to the keenest and raciest of sneers. We are romantic enough to prefer the sublime visionary to the utilitarian philosopher, to the calculating slave of worldly prudence, and to those who—from motives very different from Foster's—pour indiscriminate derision upon all the efforts, noble, though ever defeated, of

> "Poor humanity's afflicted will,
> Struggling in vain with ruthless destiny."

The essay "On the Causes of Aversion in men of Taste to Evangelical Religion," is the most elaborate and complete, if not the finest, of his efforts. An outcry was raised against it, because it ridicules the use of the old theological phraseology, and omits to dwell on the grand cause of aversion—the depravity of human nature. Both charges are unjust. Foster does not ridicule the use, but the abuse of technical language, as applied to divine things; and proposes, modestly, and merely as an experiment, to translate it in accommodation to fastidious tastes. And if he does not dilate on the depravity of man, he takes it for granted, and proceeds to examine the subordinate causes which tend to aggravate the virus of the corruption. Why blame him for not doing what he never meant to do? for not writing a "Fourfold State," or a "Whole Duty of Man," when he merely intended an ethical essay? No one has ever expressed in terms of more entire conviction, or piercing eloquence, his belief in the radical depravity of human nature. But he does not protrude the doctrine in every page. This could only have been desired by the

merest slaves of system. That part of the essay devoted to a review of the literature of ancient and modern times might, we think, have been objected to with greater justice. It applies far too stern and rigid a standard. Would not even the "Paradise Lost" shrink from angelic criticism? But here Homer, Virgil, and Lucan are tried, not by their own law, the law of nature, but by the measure of a light in which they were not permitted to walk. Homer's heroes are the very men of Homer's age—sublime and sanguinary barbarians; what else could they have been expected to be? The traits of justice and of generosity, of pity and mildness, which they exhibit, are often given them by the pure grant of the poet, and in some measure serve to counteract the ferocious lessons taught by their vices. It will never do to apply the standard of Heaven's own purity to the two old works of a Pagan poet, and to complain that a "Greek gazette" breathes not a gospel spirit, and contains not the essence of a gospel morality.

The same harshness of tone characterises his view of Modern Literature. We surrender to him Pope's "Essay on Man," *et hoc omne genus*, also the spawn of playwrights and the odes of demireps, on which he passes so sage and solemn a sentence. But we are not so willing to give up our belief in the Christianity of Addison and Johnson. True, they were not quite orthodox; but neither was Milton, whose genius Foster deems "worthy" to have mingled with that of the angels who proclaimed the coming of Christ upon the plain of Bethlehem—to have shamed to silence the muses of Paganism, or softened the pains of a Christian martyr;" and neither was Foster. True, they were not professed theologians, and did not protrude the peculiarities of the gospel into miscellaneous and desultory papers; but neither has always Foster himself. With regard to the private characters of the men, they had their faults—who wants them? But they were sincere believers, and died in the faith of Christ. And more, they shrank not, in spite of Foster's assertion, from expressing their convictions of the truth of religion, on every proper opportunity, and in defiance of the scorn of a sneering and sceptical age. Dr Johnson's impressions were profound as death, and, in his last moments, he recommended a volume of sermons as fullest on the doctrine of a propitiation. How long will it be till Christians understand the meaning of the words, "He that is not against us, is on our part;" and "the greatest of these is charity!" We blush for those feelings which induced a mind like John Foster's to cast cold-blooded doubts upon the religion of two such men, merely because they differed from him in this jot and yonder tittle of their creed, or because their mode of articulating their faith was more lax and less accurate than his own.

The "Essay on Popular Ignorance" is, in point of style and execution, decidedly the worst of all his productions. Clumsy in structure, cumbrous in style, obscure in purpose, and spasmodic in movement, it requires almost a martyr's patience to read it through. "He has run," said Hall, "a race after obscurity, and gained it." But, if we look within the rough and awkward outside, we will be richly rewarded by its perusal. We will admire its benevolent intent, its grasp of thought, the thunders of indignation which are heard from its cloudy tabernacle against the kings, and priests, and statesmen, who have kept the people in the bondage of ignorance; and will view with interest even the gigantic gropings of his mind amid the gloomy subject, like those of the Cyclops in the cave, or of Samson stretching at the pillars. We will admit, however, that his tints are too uniform and too sombre; that he allows not sufficiently for that wild natural knowledge which (like the unconsolidated ether of the heavens) has been diffused at every period, in the shape of common sense, or fine superstition, or floating poetry; that he expects too much from the accumulation of mere unassimilated, unkindled, unbaptised information; and that he overrates the influence and responsibility of governments in the matter, forgetting that the primary end of all such institutions is to manage the temporal concerns and provide for the temporal wants of their subjects; that, in the wants and diseases of

the spiritual nature, "the patient best ministers to himself;" that the exact value of mere mental education, as a means of morality and happiness, is not yet settled; and that the difficulties connected with its mode and management have always been so numerous and formidable, as to explain, if not excuse, the reluctance of many of the ablest and wisest of state-physicians to intermeddle with a case so delicate and perilous. The book has been lately re-written and reprinted. We mention this, for the purpose of noting Foster's character as a redacteur of his own works. He reminds us in it of some huge animal walking backwards. Expressions originally clumsy are rubbed down, and left in a state of more awkward and helpless clumsiness than before; unmusical periods are torn into harsher discord; obscurities are blotched into more hopeless obscurity still; his intricacies he deems he has clarified, when he has cast them into other and more perplexed arrangement. Some of his finest illustrations he spoils by addition; some of his strongest expressions he emasculates by subtraction; and leaves the whole uncongenial business with a shrug, half of chagrin, and half of ludicrous gratitude, that, if he has made it no better, he has not left it much worse than it was before.

He published, so far as we are aware, but one sermon, if sermon it can be called, which is, in fact, an essay with a text at top. This was his celebrated discourse on Indian Idolatry. We never so fully saw its merit as when listening awhile ago to some missionaries professing to give an account of Hindooism. In their hands, it became simply ludicrous and silly, instead of being an object of grave scorn and hatred; and the farce was completed by their holding up a specimen of an idol, which was received with a shout of laughter. But Foster grapples with the real and comprehensive character of the system. While treating with all the austerity of his colossal contempt the multitudinous fooleries of its mythology, he concedes to it, although too reluctantly and sparingly, the possession of a certain sublimity, springing from its antiquity, its prevalence, its power, and the splendour, as of mingled blood and fire, which surrounds its temples, and confirms its reign. By proclaiming its possession of such attributes, he desires to awaken against it efforts commensurate with its greatness, and an animosity profound as its age. We never make sufficient exertions to oppose an enemy we despise. We must fear ere we can foil the foe. Nor can that system be purely ridiculous and contemptible which has gathered round it the grandeur and the associations of centuries, which chains to its throne millions of immortals, which has "established castes that have flowed apart, and refused to mix, through immemorial tracts of time," and "barriers of utter abhorrence" between various classes, which have remained unbroken for ages, and cemented its foundations by many and many a Ganges of human blood. Poor expedient for kindling ire against "an ancient, monumental, cruel, and elaborate" religion like this, the exhibition of one of its idols to a gaping and laughing audience! It was not, besides, giving the system its due. The idol, which here, in the grasp of an enemy, and held up in its naked absurdity before an audience of enemies, was merely ridiculous, would, were we to change the scene, and see it the centre of a million flashing eyes, surrounded by the pomps of its ceremonial, overhung by the canopy of its burning heaven, mirrored in its gigantic stream, and perfumed by the incense of its swarthy adorers, become infinitely more respected, as well as infinitely more the object of terror and hatred. The half of this sermon is written in Foster's best style, is dipped in the deepest dye of his philosophy, and radiant with all the poetry of his nature. His picture of war is the best we have read, not excepting that very different one in Gulliver; but who can hope, in a sermon or sentence, to describe adequately the profound and prodigious thing—War! As easily have collected all the blood of Borodino or Waterloo in a basin. In the latter half, he entangles himself with supposed objections, urged by fatalists against missions, as if one who had drunk the "coal-black wine" of that miserable delusion were to be rea-

soned with any more than a wild beast or a maniac.

He is the author, moreover, of a very long and very characteristic Preface to Doddridge's "Rise and Progress." We admire particularly its introduction, wherein he muses on a library in a peculiar and most impressive style, spreading the genius and the gloom of his mind over the place, where a silent people have fixed their abode, filling the populous solitude of books with his reveries, and weaving a cobweb of melancholy cogitation over the crowded shelves. Books talk to him, as he sits pensive and alone: they tell him the history of those who read and those who wrote them; names inscribed centuries ago upon their margins or blank pages suggest strange surmises as to the fate of those who bore them; and the vices or virtues, the weal or the wo, of their deceased authors, seem to cluster round, or to flash out, from the dumb volumes, and to stir the leaves with "airs from heaven or blasts from hell." It is the day-dream of a strange but holy soul. And turning round from his books, how closely does he grapple in a series of interrogations with the hearts and consciences of his readers! It is like a spirit talking to us of eternity, over the mouth of the grave, and by the light of a waning moon. How strict yet tender the questionings! The conscience, a discoloured form, is naked and bare before the questioner's eye, and writhes visibly in the force of his tremendous investigation.

He has written, besides all this, a series of very unequal articles in the "Eclectic Review" (since collected into volumes), where, amid much that was weighty and profound, he perpetrated a great deal of unwieldy, slovenly, dreary, and leaden prose. In them he has painted, with much force, what he calls the "Tragedy" of Hume's death-bed; he has made a desperate but unsuccessful effort to solve the problem of Coleridge's genius—a subject on which few but Hazlitt have hitherto written adequately, who seemed created to criticise Coleridge; he has written a long analysis and panegyric of Southey's prodigious poem, the "Curse of Kehama;" and condescended to break the butterfly, Mrs Montague, on his austere wheel, and to moralise on the memoirs of the miserable Foote. We recollect, too, with much zest, some articles intensely and terribly sarcastic on the Hindoo mythologies, and their English defenders. His style, ponderous, powerful, like the trample of an elephant, constantly bewrayed him; but it is a proud reflection for his admirers, the more especially since his departure, that all his writings, anonymous or acknowledged, had the welfare of the human race as their grand object; that, too peculiar, too unbent, before the Dagon of conventional taste, to be popular, in the ordinary sense at present, they bide their time; that, as it is, they have secured for him already an earthly immortality; and, what is far more, they are doubtless destined, from their moral and religious influences, to lend lustre to that crown of eternal life of which he was the eager but humble expectant. For full particulars concerning his private history, we refer our readers to his recently published life. In his youth, as we have hinted, he is said to have been tinged with sceptical sentiments, which were gradually exchanged for a consistent and genuine, though a gloomy form of religion. One of the first things that attracted notice to his early discourses was a remarkable expression in one of them—"It was as impossible for Christ's body to have rested in the sepulchre, as for snow to remain, unmelted, on the surface of the sun." He became a preacher; but not a popular one. His matter was too profound for the apprehension of his audience, his manner stiff and cold, his voice low and husky. To listen to a man solely from the *prestige* of his reputation, was soon found to be a tax too heavy to be paid often or long. He emptied—cleaned out—in the most masterly style, two or three chapels. "His words," said Hall, "may be fire within, but the moment they leave his lips they freeze, and fall down at his feet." He ultimately gave up preaching, and came to reside at Stapleton, near Bristol. He attended for years, while there, the ministry of Robert Hall. He enjoyed his intimacy, and so commanded

his respect, and almost terror, that the great preacher felt embarrassed if he saw him while he was going on; and the Essayist used to sit in a corner of the chapel, where he could not be seen! He thus qualified himself for writing the somewhat hypercritical estimate which was published after Hall's death. Like Dr Johnson, he was notoriously reluctant to write, and yet, like Dr Johnson, he wrote a great deal;—much that has been published, and, perhaps, more that has fed the flames. He was a modest and unassuming man. Once introduced to Coleridge, he was asked, at the close of the interview, why he had been so silent. He replied, "Oh, who durst speak while *he* was talking." He was one of the most faithless and forgetful of correspondents, as Dr Chalmers and others can testify. Within these few years, he confined his composition principally to an article now and then in a newspaper. Several political papers in the "Morning Chronicle," about the years 1834–5, and 6, were from his pen. He took all along a lively interest in missions, and particularly in the Baptist mission to Hindostan. He was, as already stated, more awfully impressed than most men by the great mysteries of being; and was once known, in a moment of deep despondency, when asked for a subscription to some new means of religious instruction—a chapel, we think—to refuse, with the words, "What good can it do? Men seem determined to go to the devil, do what we will to prevent it." This could only, however, have been a temporary ebullition. In his youth, he was very romantic in his tendencies, and moonlight solitary walks of extraordinary length are laid to his charge. In October, 1843, at the advanced age of seventy-six, he rendered back his strong and gloomy soul to his Creator.

SECOND SITTING.

There are two classes of character of whom the biography is likely to be peculiarly interesting. One includes those whose lives have been passed in the glare of publicity—who have bulked largely in public estimation, and who have mingled much with the leading characters of the age. The life of such includes in it, in fact, a multitude of lives, and turns out to be, not a solitary picture, but an entire gallery of interesting portraits. The other class comprises those of whom the world knows little, but is eager to know much—who, passing their lives in severe seclusion, have, nevertheless, given such assurance of their manhood as to excite in the public mind an intense curiosity to know more of their habits, feelings, and history. Such an one was John Foster. While his works were widely circulated, and produced a profound impression upon the thinking minds of the country, himself was to the majority only a name. Few could tell what he was, or where he lived—what were the particulars of his outward history, or what had been the course of his mental training. He published little, he seldom appeared at public meetings, his name was never in the newspapers—when he wrote, it was generally in periodicals of limited circulation and sectarian character, and when he preached, it was to small audiences and in obscure villages. There thus hung about him a certain shade of mystery, shaping itself to the colossal estimate of his genius, which prevailed. He appeared a great man under hiding; and while some of his ardent admirers found or forced their way into his grisly den, and ascertained the prominent features of his character and facts in his life, more were left in the darkness of mystification and conjecture. For twenty years, for instance, we ourselves have been enthusiasts in reference to this writer's genius, and yet, till recently, we never so much as saw his portrait.

The veil has at length been removed. In the interesting volumes of Messrs Ryland & Sheppard we find, and principally in his own words, a full and faithful register of the leading events in his life, and of the more interesting movements in his spiritual history. The book

is arranged on a plan somewhat similar to that adopted in Carlyle's work on Cromwell. The biography constitutes an intermitting chain between the numerous letters, and is executed in a modest and intelligent manner. Besides his correspondence, there are large and valuable excerpts from his journals, and to the whole are appended interesting, though somewhat slight, notices of his character, from the pen of Mr Sheppard.

Throughout the whole of these volumes we have been impressed with the idea of a mind imperfectly reconciled and indifferently adjusted to the state of society of which it was a part—to the creed to which it had declared its adherence—to the very system of things which surrounded it. This is true of many independent and powerful spirits; but in Foster's mind the antagonism has this peculiarity—it is united to deep reverence and to sincere belief. It is not the fruit of any captious or malignant disposition—it does not spring from any sinister motive. The guilty wish is never with him the parent of the gloomy thought. The tremendous doubts which oppress him have forced themselves into the sphere of his soul, and hang there as if sustained by the power of some dark enchantment. You see his mind labouring under an eclipse which will not pass away. In contemplation of the mysteries of earth and time, he stands helpless. Indeed, such gloomy cogitations formed so large a part of his mental scenery, and had so long rivetted his gaze, that you can almost conceive him disappointed had they suddenly disappeared. Like the prisoner of Chillon, who, habituated to the gloom of his dungeon, and having made friends with his dismal companions, at last "regained his freedom with a sigh," Foster would have stared strangely, and almost unhappily, though it had been at the apparition of the "new heavens and the new earth" arising in room of the present, which his melancholy fancy had so dreadfully discoloured. The causes of this habitual gloom seem to have been complex. First, he was naturally a man of a morbid disposition. His mind fastened and clung to the dark side of every question—to the more rugged horn of each great dilemma—to the shadows, and not to the lights, of every picture. To do this was with him an instinct, which, instead of repressing, he nursed into a savage luxury. Secondly, he was for a large portion of his life a solitary, struggling, and disappointed man—preaching to people who did not understand him, struggling with straitened circumstances, and unsustained, till middle age, by the sympathy of any female friend. Had a man of his temperament met sooner with the breeze of general and generous appreciation, and, above all, had he found in youth such a kindred and congenial spirit as afterwards in his accomplished and gifted wife, he had lived a much happier and more useful existence, and taken a kindlier, and, we trust, a truer view of the world and of mankind. Thirdly as an eloquent writer elsewhere observes, "Foster never gave himself a real scientific education, and although possessed of keenest sagacity, never rose into the sphere of a great and a trained philosopher. He was to this what a brave bandit is to a regular soldier. Scientific culture is sure to beget scientific calm. The philosopher is taught to take a wide, comprehensive, dispassionate, and rounded view of things which never frets his heart, if it often fails to satisfy his intellect. Foster's glimpses of truth, on the contrary, are intense and vivid, but comparatively narrow, and are tantalising in exact proportion to their vividness and intensity. He sees his points in a light so brilliant that it deepens the surrounding darkness. His minute mode of insight, too, contributed to his melancholy. He looks at objects so narrowly, that, as to a microscope, they present nothing but naked and enlarged ugliness. His eye strips away all those fine illusions of distance which are, after all, as real as the nearer and narrower view. This is the curse which blasts him—to see too clearly, and the lens through which he looks becomes truly a "terrible crystal." Like Cassandra, he might well wail for his fatal gift. It is a dowry she got in wrath, and has faithfully transmitted to

many besides Foster, who may with her exclaim,

"O ill to me the lot awarded,
Thou evil Pythian god."

From man, thus too utterly bare before him, he turns away, with a deep pensive joy, to Nature, feeling that she is true, were nothing else true; that she is beautiful, were all else deformed; that she stands innocent and erect, though her tenant has fallen; and, like a child in her mother's arms, does he repose, regaining old illusions, and recalling long-departed dreams of joy. There is something to us peculiarly tender and pathetic in Foster's love of nature. It is not so much an admiration, as it is a passionate and perpetual longing. It is not a worship, but a disappointed love. He seeks to throw his being into nature. It is as if he felt his heart budding in the spring trees, his pulse beating high in the midnight tempest and in the ocean billow, his soul shooting up, like living fire, into Snowdon, as he gazes upon it; or we might almost imagine him the divorced Spirit of some lovely scene, yearning and panting after renewed communion, "gazing himself away" into the bosom of nature again, while the murmuring of streams, and the song of breezes, and the waving of pines, were singing, of these strange nuptials, the soft epithalamium. He tries to engage creation in mystic converse. He seeks for meanings in her mighty countenance, which are not always revealed to him. He asks her awful and unanswered questions. He seems to cry out to the river, "What meanest thou, thou eloquent babbler? Wilt thou never speak plain—wilt thou never shape me any distinct utterance, from the vague and soft tumults of thine everlasting song?" To the rocks and mountains, "Will ye never reveal those secrets of an elder day, which are piled up in your massive walls; to your solemn hieroglyphics shall there never arrive the key?" But to add, in stern resignation, "Be it so, then; retain your silence, or utter on your inarticulate sounds; better these than the jargon, the laughter, and the blasphemies of the reptile and miscreant race of man; to you, my dumb kindred, I am nearer and dearer than to those that so speak."

In forming, however, such a view of man and of life, Foster has committed, we think, an enormous error—the great mistake of his history. He has failed to see the beauty of life, its hopeful tendencies, the dignity of that discipline which is ripening man for a nobler destiny, the soul of goodness which underlies even the evils, the abuses, and the mistakes of the world, and the glory which springs from human suffering, and shines through human tears. In all this he sees little else than unmitigated and unredeemed misery and guilt, and flies to the prospect of death for relief, as the opium-eater to his drug, or the drunkard to his dram-bottle. "I have yet," he says, toward the close of his life, "one luminary, the visage of death." And in the rising of that pale luminary, that ghostly sun, he expects a reply to all his questionings, and a rest to all the wanderings of his spirit. Surely he expected far too much from such a source. For, in the first place, since the "meaning" of the universe is infinite, can it be explained all at once to a finite being? It is beyond even the might of Death to give to a mind infinite illumination, to which it has failed to give infinite capacity. It may, it must, greatly extend the view, and brighten the medium; but to suppose that it instantly makes all mysteries plain, were to leave little to do for the vast eternity beyond it. Besides, may not mystery continue to be an atmosphere fit for rearing certain future, as it is for rearing certain present, conditions of spiritual being? The caterpillar and the butterfly respire the same air. Certain plants, and those of a strong and hardy kind, grow best in the shade. To suppose that Death should explain every enigma is, in fact, to enthrone it in the room of Omnipotence. Thirdly, unless first we be reconciled to life, unless we learn to interpret its sublime hieroglyphics, to feel its divine beauty, to read its "open secret," to adore while we wonder at its darkest dispensations, what can death do for us? The man who, loathing, despising, revil-

ing life, finding only desolation and barrenness in all its borders, turns away from under the vine and the fig-tree, and sits with lonely Jonah under his withered gourd, saying, "I do well to be angry, even unto death," is guilty of cowardice, if not of essential suicide: he may be a gifted, but is hardly a heroic man. "It is," says Schiller, "a serious thing to die—it is a more serious thing to live." So it is a great and glorious thing to die; it is a thing greater, more glorious, god-like, to live a resigned, active, and "blessed," if not happy life. Foster has tarried too long in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and spent many needless hours in the dungeon of the Giant Despair; and, worse, has dreamed that to come forth from its threshold was to reach the Celestial City by a single step!

Before proceeding to speak of Foster's merits, we have, in corroboration of these remarks, to advance against him one or two serious charges, made more in sorrow than in anger. We charge him, in the first place, with a sort of moral cowardice, which it is painful to observe in a man of such gigantic proportions. In his views of moral evil, there is more of the fascinated fear of the planet-struck than of the strong courage of the combatant. He looks at it rather than seeks to strike it down. Knowing that Omnipotence alone can prostrate it in its entireness—that Omniscience alone can explain its existence—he is not sufficiently alive to the facts that it is reducible, that every one may, in some degree, reduce it, that each smallest reduction proves that it is not infinite, and that the farther you reduce evil, the nearer you reach the solution of the great problems—why it is, and whence it rose. He seems sometimes to regard the efforts of men to remove, or mitigate, moral, or even physical evil, with as much contempt as he would the efforts of barbarians, with their cries and kettle-drums, to drive away an eclipse from off the face of the sun. His *own* attempts to abate evil are thus paralysed. He keeps indeed his post—he maintains the contest—but it is languidly, and with frequent looks cast behind toward a great reserve of force which he expects to be brought, but which is slow to come, into action. It is the old story of the waggoner and Hercules. The road is miry, the wain is heavy, he is weary, how easy it were for the god to come down and perform the task! And because he will not yet, Foster becomes sullen, disappointed, and all but desperate. Let no one say that we are not fair judges of a mind so peculiar as his, that we know not what doubts and difficulties oppressed him, or how they affected his spirit. Every thinking mind is haunted, more or less, by precisely those questions which Foster felt himself unable to solve. Luther felt them in the Warteburg, but bated on account of them not one jot of heart or hope. Evil there was in the world; he was sent to make it *less;* that was all he knew, and that was quite sufficient for his resolute and robust spirit. Howard felt them in his "Circumnavigation of Charity," but, instead of speculating as to why prisons were needed at all, he went on and made them better. Every missionary to the heathen feels such difficulties meeting him in their very darkest shape, and yet perseveres in his holy work, and if he can smite away but a finger from the black colossal statue of evil which stands up before him, is content. Should any deem that we misrepresent Foster's feelings and sentiments on this subject, we refer them to his journals and letters, and particularly to that most withering and unhappy letter addressed to Dr Harris.

We find not less distinct evidence of the same disease in his contributions to the "Eclectic," particularly in his review of "Chalmers's Astronomical Discourses"—in our opinion a very forced, clumsy, and unsatisfactory critique. There, at the supposition of snow existing in some of the other planets, he startles in terror, seeing in it a sign that evil has found its way there as well as here. He is so frightened at this little speck, as almost to back out from the discoveries of modern astronomy altogether. Now we think this a cowardice unworthy, yet characteristic, of Foster; for, in the first place, what is there so terrific in snow, the pure, innocent, beautiful

meteor, falling from heaven like the shed feathers of the celestial dove, or lying, a many-millioned mirror to the moonbeams? Should not, on the contrary, that far gleam be welcomed as a proof of unity among the heavenly bodies, as attesting the omnipresence of certain general laws? But, secondly, is snow necessarily the sign of a curse, or a certain indication of the existence of sin? This, we think, springs from a theory universally held at one time by a certain school of theologians, which the researches of geology have exploded, and which Foster's powerful intellect ought, apart from these, to have taught him to reject, that every species of physical evil is the product of moral, that every slight inconvenience, as well as formidable mischief, may be traced to the same root. Such an absurd theory teaches its votaries to cower under the falling snow as under the curse of the Eternal—to find a new testimony to the existence of evil in the icicles—glorious ear-rings!—which each winter morning hang under the eaves; and in every sound, from the earthquake to the sneeze, to overhear the voice of Sin. No; this will never do. Step forth, John Foster, into that strange snow of Mars, bathe in the bracing cold of the clime, confront its stern winds, consider its laws of austere and awful progress, and come back a healthier, happier, and better man.

Had this speculation on snow been only a passing reverie, it had been unworthy any serious notice. But, like the snow on the dusky and dark-red brow of Mars, it lies significant—a still, settled index of much behind and beyond it. It involves in it all the elements of Foster's quarrel with the system of things; for as assuredly as in Byron's case it was a quarrel; nor were their grounds so dissimilar as might have been at first supposed. Neither knew the real meaning of that grand old fable of Prometheus, as shadowing forth the history of man, nay, forming a dim but colossal type of that higher mystery—the mystery of godliness—bearing to it such a resemblance as does a battlement of evening clouds to the mountains over which it stands, and whose shapes it mutely mimics—the glory of suffering, the beauty of sorrow, as teachers, friends, guides, were to them in a great measure veiled.

But, secondly, we charge Foster with taking up an attitude of view and observation which rendered any just conception of the universe or its Author impossible, and which *a priori* throws discredit upon any theory of explanation propounded by himself. His attitude is that of one who confounds the shade over his own mind with the universe which it discolours, in whose eye (as in the well-known fable) the monster-fly swallows up the sun, and who, because he is capable of asking the great question, imagines that, therefore, he is able, or entitled, to receive the infinite reply. Nothing but such an infinite answer could appease such inquiries as Foster asks at the earth and the heavens. And because the earth spins round, and the skies shine on in silence, and no such reply as he craves will ascend from their deepest caverns, or come down from their loftiest summits, Foster is disappointed, the more in proportion to his love, just as the more you love any individual, the more you are chagrined if he will not answer you some curious question, but remains obstinately dumb. And though, as we have said, he is fond of questioning nature, and loves her solemn harmonies, he is no "Fine-ear" to catch that subtler speech, that fairy music, that "language within language," that angelic strain, which some few purged and prepared spirits hear, or seem to hear, in the rustle of the leaves awakened at midnight from their dreams of God—in the great psalm of the autumn blasts—in the sweet self-talk of the lovesick summer waves—in the blue smile of the sky—nay, in the hush of evening, and the stammering sparkle of the stars. To these low and silvery whispers, piercing the clash of all common and terrific sounds, like the calm "No" of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, heard amidst the idolatrous symphonies and cymbals on the plain of Dura, Foster's ear is deaf as Byron's. He is aware of their existence, indeed; he listens to hear them, but they will not speak to him their profoundest tidings; he hears only a great tumult, but knows not what

it is—a tumult of grandeur, terror: sweet and despairing tones, endlessly intermingled—and dies, believing that God is love, but not feeling, with Tennyson, that

> "Every cloud that spreads above,
> And veileth love, itself is Love."

What Foster demands is precisely that which cannot here, perhaps never, be granted: it is a logical demonstration of the goodness and wisdom of God. Such a demonstration seems impossible: it supposes the possibility of a just doubt on such a subject; and yet, if this doubt do once enter the mind, no mere argument can ever expel it. It represents the question as to the character of Deity in the light of a dreadful game, which may possibly go against him. It proves, after all, no more than this—that there is a very high probability that God is not a demon. On such bladders do some men try to swim through the ocean of the infinite mind. Far better to plunge into it at once, trusting implicitly and fearlessly to those voices within the soul—to those whispers in nature—to those smiles on earth below and heaven above—to those indefinite but profound impressions, not to speak of those distinct declarations of God's Word, which do not demonstrate, but intuitively and irresistibly communicate, the tidings that "All is well!"

"After all, we are in good hands," was the simple conclusive reply of a well-conditioned gentleman of our acquaintance to one who had, in a strain of morbid eloquence, taken the darker side; conclusive, because it expressed what is the natural feeling of all untainted and unsophisticated minds, as well as the mature and ultimate result of the highest order of philosophic thinkers. But it is exceedingly difficult to reach this conclusion through that process which John Foster employs; nearly as much so as by digging down through the darkness of earth to reach the sun and stars of the antipodes.

Our final charge, again, is that he takes too dark, morbid, and monkish a view of man and of society. From this, indeed, seem to spring his other errors. He who doubts of man can hardly fail to doubt of God. To believe in man, is an indispensable requisite to a proper conception of Deity. We hold profoundly the doctrine of human depravity; but we do think that Foster's views of man's nature, whether as exhibited in individual character or in collective society, are far too stern and harsh. We would as soon judge of an assembly of living men and women from a book of anatomical sketches, as of the true character of the world from Foster's pictures. Earth is not the combination of hell and chaos which he represents it to be. Men are not the pigmy fiends, Lilliputians in intellect, Brobdignagians in crime, from whose society he shrinks in loathing, and the tie connecting himself with whom he would cut in sunder if he could. The past history of society is not that dance of death, that hideous procession of misery and guilt toward destruction, which paints itself on the gloomy retina of his eye. We protest, in the name of our fallen but human, perishing but princely, family, against such libels as "Gulliver's Travels" and Foster's entire works. What a fierce, impotent scowl, too, he continually casts upon even the innocent amusements of the race—such as children's balls, social parties—begrudging, it would seem, even to doomed and predestinated criminals such consolations as their case would admit of. More cruel than the ancient crucifiers, he will grant no stupefying nor cheering draught to the expiring malefactor. How reluctant, too, he is to admit any moral merit (intellectual merit he is always ready to concede) to those who differ from him in creed, not, perhaps, more widely than he is found, after all, to differ from the rest of the Christian world! How he prowls, like a hyena, round the bedsides of dying sceptics, though repeatedly owning himself so far a sceptic, to drink in their last groans, and insult whether the calm or the horror of their closing hours; staking thus, in a measure, the holy cause of religion upon a wretched computation of dying beds, upon the *pros* and *cons* of the expressions of disease, delirium, and despair—a task fit enough for a contributor to the "Methodist Magazine," but unworthy of a

spirit like Foster's. And how slow to admit any degree of interest, or of poetry, or of grandeur, in those colossal faiths which have ruled for ages the great majority of mankind!—an absurdity as great as though one were to go about to deny the lustre of the serpent's eyes because his breath was poison, or the beauty of the tiger's skin, because his drink was blood. And, then, by what a safety-valve he does escape from the consequences of his fatalism, by supposing a general jail-delivery of criminals, who, by his own showing, are *no more guilty* than the avalanche which destroys the Alpine traveller, or the sandy column which whelms the wanderer in the desert!

After all this, it may seem paradoxical to assert that we think Foster an amiable man. He was so undoubtedly, if universal testimony can be credited; but he was a slave, in the first place, to unsettled doubts, as well as, throughout all his life, to a gloomy temperament which clouded his native disposition. His genius reminds us of the moon, but of the moon turned into blood, forced, against her nature, into a louring, portentous aspect—no longer the *still*, calm mistress of the night, but a meteor of wrath and fear, emitting at best a gloomy smile, and furnishing a light fit only to guide the footsteps of murderers. We turn, now, gladly from these objections, to remark some interesting peculiarities in Foster's character and intellect, as evinced in his "Memoirs," "Correspondence," and articles in the "Eclectic Review." We notice, first, his generosity and width as a critic. Narrow as a moral judge, he is, as a critic of authors and books, entirely the reverse. He sympathises with all genuine excellence. This alone proves, we think, his superiority to Hall. Hall, we fear, had little admiration for other writers beyond a very few, either inferior to, or cognate with, himself. His treatment of Coleridge, for instance, would be insufferably insolent, were it not ludicrously absurd. Having never taken the trouble to master the principles upon which Coleridge *based* his thought, or the language in which he expressed it, his verdict on him is as worthless as a plain English scholar's were upon the metres of Pindar. To modern poetry, too, and all its miracles, he was notoriously indifferent. Byron he never read—an omission as contemptible as though he had not gone forth to see a comet which had made itself visible at noonday. Wordsworth and Southey he habitually maligned. Now, all this may seem very great to some of his fawning parasites, but seems superlatively unworthy of such a man as Hall. Foster, on the other hand, is a genial and a generous praiser, of much beneath, much on a level, and much above his own mark. He has a kind word to say for poor Cottle, and his "Fall of Cambria." He is enthusiastic in his admiration of Hall, Chalmers, Fox, Grattan, Curran, Tooke, &c. Coleridge is the god of his idolatry, and bitterly does he deplore his miserable habits. Of a transcendent dramatic work (could it be "Cain" or the "Cenci?") he says, "I was never so fiercely carried off by Pegasus before—the fellow *neighed* as he ascended." All works he seems to have judged, not by an arbitrary canon of his own or of others' establishment, but by the impulse given to his own mind, the stir of respondent strength, whether in contradiction or consent, awakened within him, and the joy which they had the power to spread over his melancholy spirit, like sunshine surprising a sullen tarn into smiles.

We notice in these volumes numerous evidences of Foster's romantic tendencies. He was a lover of solitary and moonlight walks. "In Chichester there is still a chapel, where the well-worn bricks of the aisles exhibit the traces of his solitary pacings to and fro by moonlight." In all beautiful and majestic scenes he invariably lost himself, as men do in the mazes of a wood, Reverie was his principal luxury, and became his darling sin. In combating the romantic tendency in one of his essays, he is, in reality, fighting with *himself*; just as, strange to tell, the objections he confutes in his famous sermon on Missions reappear, from his own pen, in a letter to Harris, written years afterwards. Formerly we said, "Foster fighting with a fatalist, reminds us of the whole ocean into tempest tossed, to waft a feather, or to drown

a fly." Alas! we now find that Foster and the fatalist were forms of the same mind, and that the fatalist remains last upon the field. So, having shrived himself of his original romance by writing an essay against it, the old nature returned with double force than formerly, and was in him to his dying day. In connection with this, we notice the abundance and beauty of his natural imagery. No one has turned to more account, in his writings, the charms of nature, and particularly the evanescent and ghostly glories of the night, the tints of moonlit flowers, the colours of midnight fields, the shadows of woods, the shapes of mountains resting against the stars, all the fine gradations of the coming on of evening, all the wandering voices of the darkness, speaking what in the day they seem to dare not do, and those "solemn meditations," as peculiar to night as its celestial fires—all such were well known and inexpressibly dear to the soul of this lonely man. In his use of such images, we observe this peculiarity. Some men surround their minds with them *unconsciously;* they go out to the fields without one thought of collecting images or illustrations, and yet come home laden with them, as with burs or other herbage, which we unwittingly gather in the woods. Foster goes out on express purpose to find them, as if he were a-nutting; looks at every object with this question, How can I employ you in the expression of truth? and returns triumphant with a thousand analogies. This, we think, has somewhat affected the naturalness and freedom of his imagery. We should prefer had he allowed the beauties of nature to slide into his soul, and to blend with his thoughts,

"Like some sweet beguiling melody;
So sweet, we know not we are listening to it."

Another phase of this romantic tendency was his extreme attachment to the society of cultivated females, and the conception he formed of the married life as the panacea of his ills. In such company he laid aside the monk, and became all gentleness and good-humour. It acted like a spell upon him, to soothe his most unquiet feelings, and to lay for a season his darkest doubts. It roused, too, the faculties of his mind, and he never was half so eloquent, neither in his writings, nor in the pulpit, nor in the company of his co-mates in intellect—Anderson and Hall—as when, the evening shadows, or the first moonbeams, stealing into the room, he discoursed to "fascinating females," who could understand as well as listen, and feel as well as understand, of the "feelings and value of genius," or of topics dearer and nobler still, while it seemed to him "as if the soul of Eloisa pervaded all the air." Such moments he relished with the intensest gratification; they seemed to him foretastes of Paradise, and of the society of angels, and he might well say that they should never be "forgotten." Out of those "fascinating females" he selected one, almost a duplicate of himself—equally intellectual, equally well-informed, equally pious, and equally oppressed with the tremendous darkness of this dark economy. To this lady he addressed his first celebrated essays. From her society he expected much happiness. On the eve of the marriage, he met, he tells us, "the snowdrops and other signs and approaches of the spring, with a degree of interest which has never accompanied any former vernal equinox." And his expectations seem to have been abundantly fulfilled. After many happy years of intercourse, and latterly, on her part, much severe suffering, she died, leaving him less to regret her loss than to grieve that their spirits had not entered together within that mighty veil which had so long tantalised and saddened both.

"The living are not envied of the dead." But how often are the dead envied of the living! And no one ever felt this solemn envy more than Foster. We can conceive him kneeling in charnel-houses, and praying their ashes to break silence and speak out. We can conceive him crying aloud amid the midnight hills for some wandering spirit of the departed to render up the secret; and as friend after friend dropped away into the silent land, this impatient eagerness strengthened, and almost amounted to a feeling that those he

loved were bound to come back and relieve his harrowing anxieties. And it shook him with the very agony of desire when the wife of his bosom and of his soul —his shadow in the other sex, whose doubts, and fears, and desires on this subject were the counterpart of his own—departed first within the veil. We can image him on his widowed pillow praying for and straining his eyes for her re-appearance—less to see her beloved face once more, than to hear some authentic tidings of the shadowy world. But she, too, was silent. She, too, had taken the dread oath of secresy which all the dead must take; and he had to recur, in his disappointed loneliness, to the prospect of speedily joining her in that strange company, and of becoming, in his turn, as intelligent and as uncommunicative as she.

This supposition is the less extravagant, as we find from these memoirs that Foster was a firm believer in apparitions, and in all the other departments of what this enlightened age — which has discovered that the soul of man is a secretion of the brain, and that the snail is growing up by slow stages to the Shakspere (and we suppose the Shakspere to the Supreme God!)—calls exploded superstitions. He grasped at every line, however frail, which linked him to the spiritual world. If he saw not visions, he dreamed dreams, felt presentiments, shuddered as he almost called up to his imagination the form of a ghost. This "folly of the wise," if a folly it be, he shared with many of the greatest minds of the age—with Napoleon, Byron, Coleridge, and Shelley, who all felt that there were some things in heaven and earth more than are dreamt of in our philosophies. In Foster these feelings did not amount to fears. They were rather strong yet shuddering desires to know the best or the worst which spiritual beings could tell or intimate about that future state of existence of which he felt that Revelation had told him little, and Nature nothing at all. From the company of real solid sorrows, and of men whom he deemed "earthly, sensual, devilish," he turned eagerly, yet pensively, to seek communion with the spirits of the departed; but even these sad companions were shy to him—they met him not in his solitary walks, and in all his wanderings he was "alone with the night."

And yet, in spite of all these melancholy musings and romantic tendencies, Foster was a keen, stern, and sarcastic observer of men and manners—of society and political progress. In politics he was a "Radical and something more"—an independent thinker, despising all ties of party, and standing on every question like a fourth estate—one who could "sit upon the ground and tell strange stories of the deaths of kings," and who never in one instance sacrificed an atom of the right to an acre of the expedient. It is worth while reading in this work his musings, as of a separate spirit, upon the public transactions of his day. In society, too, he sat an insulated being, whose silence was often more formidable than his words. His face, even when he spoke not, shone a quiet mirror to the "thoughts and intents of the hearts" of those around him, and he came away with their past as well as present history silently inscribed upon his mind. His conversational sarcasm was tremendous. "Was not the Emperor Alexander a very pious man?" "Very pious," he answered: "I believe he said grace ere he swallowed Poland." We could quote, if we durst, unpublished specimens still racier. Hall himself is said to have felt somewhat nervous in his presence when in this mood; and there is a floating rumour of a meeting between him and Lord Brougham on some educational question, in which his lordship came off, and shabbily, second best.

Foster's indolence has been often, but, we think, unjustly, condemned. It ought rather to be deplored. Unfurnished with a regular training, yet furnished with an exquisitely sensitive taste, early "damned to the mines" of hopeless professional toil, transferred thence to the drudgery of writing for bread—never gifted with a fluent language nor a rapid pen—what wonder that he found composition an ungracious task, or that he shrank from it with a growing and deepening disgust? Our surprise is, that he wrote so much, and not

that he wrote so little. Latterly, but for an overwhelming sense of duty, he would not have written at all. If we saw a giant, whose arms had been cut off, moving in impotent strength his bleeding fragments, who would not weep at the spectacle? In such mutilated might sat Foster at his desk.

His "Journal and Correspondence" contain much attractive and interesting matter. His letters, without ease, have great sincerity, calm discernment, disturbed by bursts of misanthropical power, as when he calls for a tempest of fire and brimstone upon the Russians, on their invasion of Poland, and a perpetual stream of sarcasm adds a tart tingo to the whole. His "Journal," on the other hand, is rich in those thoughts which procreate thought in others—in descriptions of natural objects which he encountered—in quiet side-long glances into human character—in the expression of gloomy and desolate feelings, and in sudden, momentary, and timorous glimpses into the deeper abysses of thought than those where his spirit usually dwells. How grand this, for instance: —"Argument from miracles for the truth of the Christian doctrines! Surely it is fair to believe that those who received from heaven superhuman power received likewise superhuman wisdom. Having rung the *great bell of the universe*, the sermon to follow must be extraordinary." The whole "Journal," indeed, is a repository of such things.

How much of Foster's originality lay in his thoughts, or how much in his images, or how much of it resulted from his early isolation from suitable books and kindred minds, we stay not to inquire. As it is, we have in his works the collected thoughts of a powerful mind that has lived "collaterally or aside" to the world—that never flattered a popular prejudice—that never bent to a popular idol—that never deserted in the darkest hour the cause of liberty—that never swore to the shibboleth of a party, or, at least, never kept its vow—and that now stands up before us alone, massive and conspicuous, a mighty and mysterious fragment, the Stonehenge of modern moralists. Shall we inscribe immortality upon the shapeless yet sublime structure? He who reared it seems, from the elevation he has now reached, to answer, No; what is the thing you call immortality to me, who have cleft that deep shadow and entered on this greater and brighter state of being?

We dare not say, with a writer formerly quoted, that to "Foster the cloud has now become the sun." But certainly we may say to him, "Behold the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth," if not in its noonday effulgence, yet at least in its mild and twilight softness. In the night he dwelt, and although the visage of death may not have been to him the glorious luminary he expected, yet is it not much that the night is gone, and gone for ever? We take our leave of him in his own words—"'Paid the debt of nature?' No; it is not paying a debt, it is rather like bringing a note to a bank to obtain solid gold in exchange for it. In this case you bring this cumbrous body, which is nothing worth, and which you could not wish to retain long; you lay it down, and receive for it, from the eternal treasures, liberty, victory, knowledge, rapture."

ROBERT HALL.

FIRST SITTING.

ROBERT HALL was the *facile princeps* of English Dissent. And though his merits have been enshrined and emblazoned in the criticism of Foster, Dugald Stewart, Southey, and John Scott, as well as of Mackintosh and Parr, we may yet, gleaning after them in a field so rich, find a few stray ears. Following in their wake, we may, perchance, pick up a few floating fragments from the path of such an

argosy. As a preacher, he enjoys the traditional fame of having outstripped all his contemporaries. Some sturdy sons of the Scottish Establishment continued, indeed, long to stand up for the superiority of Chalmers; but their voice, if not drowned, was overwhelmed by the general verdict of public opinion. We believe, however, that, in the mere force of immediate impression, the Scottish preacher had the advantage. The rapidity of Hall's delivery, the ease with which finished sentences descended like a shower of pearls; the elevation of the sentiment, the purity of the composition, the earnestness of the manner, the piercing coruscations of the eye—all these taken together produced the effect of thrilling every bosom, and enchaining every countenance. But there lacked the struggle and the agony, the prophetic fury, the *insana vis*, the wild and mystic glance, seeing the invisible, and (when the highest point of his oratory was reached) the "torrent rapture" of our countryman, "taking the reason prisoner," and hurrying the whole being as before a whirlwind. In listening to Hall, you felt as under the influence of the "cup which cheers but not inebriates." Hearing Chalmers was like tasting of the "insane root." Hall's oratory might be compared to a low but thrilling air; Chalmers's to a loud and barbaric melody. Hall's excitement was fitful, varying with the state of his health and feelings; that of Chalmers was constant and screwed up to a prodigious pitch, as if by the force of frenzy. Hall's inspiration was elegant and Grecian; you said of Chalmers, as Hazlitt says of Byron, "He hath a demon, if he be not full of the God."

We speak merely of instant impression; in most other points, Chalmers is inferior to Hall. When you rob the writings of the former of the wild witchery of their delivery; when you take them into the closet; when you read them with an eye undazzled by the blaze of his spoken and acted declamation, they lose much of their interest. You may, indeed, as some do, reproduce, by an effort, the tone and rapid rhythm with which they were uttered, and imagine that you hear him all the while you read. But still, who has not felt a sad sinking down in the perusal of the writer's page, from the rapture with which he had listened to the spoken style? It had the effect of disenchantment. Sometimes, what seemed force became fustian; reasoning, sophistry; imagination, verbiage. Beauties, pointed by the tone and manner, lost their meaning; and faults, hid in the diffused effulgence, loomed out in all their magnitude. A vast deal, indeed, that was excellent and eloquent remained, but, on the whole, your regret was that he had ever published, or, at least, that you had ever read. Far otherwise with Hall. His sentiments and style were of a kind which needed little, save mere enunciation, to produce their appropriate impression. He read as well as he spoke. The classical charm which enchanted his hearers was transferred entire to the printed page.

We are not blind to the surpassing eloquence and power of Dr Chalmers's "Astronomical Discourses"—the only work quite worthy of its author's reputation. Like what we might conceive of a cataract in the sun, his soul rushes on rejoicing through the magnificent theme; and we feel, as we read, that the stars are the poetry and the religion of heaven. The excitement of the subject becomes a substitute for the intoxication of his manner: and we breathe the wish that Fontenelle, D'Alembert, and La Place, had read their scepticism away over the moving and glowing page. Nevertheless, a cool criticism will hesitate, ere it place a book, which is neither close in argument, nor profound in insight, nor finished in artistic execution, nor pure in style, beside writings which form the finest models of the English tongue (considered simply as the *vehicle* of mind), and which are as refined in thinking as they are exquisite in diction. The one, if it survive, will survive as the catacomb of a strange variety of mind, worthy of preservation partly as a brilliant oddity. The others will live and shine, as phials containing the last refinement and quintessence of their land's language.

Hall's preaching is distinct from every other school of Christian eloquence. It is not at all akin to that of the early giants of the English pulpit. He has none of Jeremy Taylor's quaint and strange beauties, of his flow and variety of style, or of his richness of imagination, "as beautiful and bounding as a steed;" nor of Barrow's compass, and masterly and conscious ease of diction; nor of Hooker's profound learning, and that rugged rhythm which interpenetrates his huge folios with music; and does not rival John Howe in serene Platonic majesty, in the combination of a golden vein of poetry with profound and practical strength, and in those great swelling, and highly-wrought passages which are the main merit of the majority of his works. With the writers of a period partly synchronising with, and partly succeeding, this—with the Owens, the Baxters, the Flavels, the Bateses, the Mantons, and the Charnocks—he has, except in sentiment, little in common. Still less does he resemble the principal preachers of Charles II.'s era in the English Church; and stands widely discriminated from the icy elegancies of Tillotson, the profound but cold-blooded speculations of Butler, the frost-work reasoning of Atterbury and Sherlock, the acid acumen of South, and the half-fledged Socinianism of Clarke. And though we may detect traces of the imitations of French models, now and then; and though here and there he equals Bossuet, Massillon, and Saurin, in their own giddy and perilous walk — that of appeal, apostrophe, and the varied prosopopœia of the pulpit—he is entirely free from their faults, their laborious and convulsive flights of fancy, their bursts and starts of counterfeited passion, their disdain of simplicity, their wilful exaggerations, their queries and adjurations, repeated till the hearers and the heavens are weary. Not less distinct is he from the polemical—we had almost said, the pugilistic—school of preaching, of which Warburton and Horsley are types; and if destitute of their learning and controversial vigour, he has none of their paradoxical bias, nor of their insufferable arrogance. He has been accused in certain quarters of wanting the unction of Newton, Romaine, Thomas Scott, &c., but he possesses all their evangelical sentiment; and let him not be hastily condemned, if he has paid a little more attention than they did to the structure of his sentences, and to the beauty of his style. In more modern times, besides Chalmers, we have heard only four preachers mentioned in the same breath with him—namely, Alison, Irving, Wardlaw, and Andrew Thomson; but he is so distinct from all, as hardly to admit of comparison. He is less finical and more forcible than the first mentioned, not to speak of the far greater weight and abundance of his matter; without the physique, the stormy energy and earnestness of the second, he has all that he lacked—the curb of common sense, good taste, and a balance of faculties; not equal to Wardlaw in the acuteness and amenity of controversy, he is an orator as well as a debater, a man of genius as well as of talent; and though destitute of the sturdy force of the lamented Antiapocryphist, he possesses a refinement and an elevation, a subtlety and a splendour, which lift him up into quite another region. Hall's characteristics as a writer are not difficult to hit. His thinking is not that of one who is able to cast much new light upon abstruse topics, but of one who is admirably adapted to take metaphysical soundings upon all subjects; his is a mind which the study of the abstract has strengthened, but not mystified—subjugated, but not enslaved; and its insight, while always distinct, and often deep, is never daring. His intellect was not merely imitative, but neither was it highly independent. In this case, his style, we think, had been less exquisitely clear and terse. Original minds are rarely so pure and perspicuous. Terms are dark. The ocean is sunless in its depths. "The infinite has difficulty in explaining itself to the finite." A certain shade of obscurity does adhere to the very highest order of minds—to Plato, to Dante, and Goethe. We do not, then, rate Hall so highly as a thinker, as we do in his character of writer, orator,

and talker. His thought was vigorous, manly, refined, but not strikingly original, and seldom comprehensive. In his celebrated sermon on "Infidelity," there is, amid a profusion of eloquence, not a new idea. Windham traced the greater part of its thinking to Burke; he could trace it no farther! The "Apology for the Liberty of the Press," again, is a tissue of splendid imitation. Burke, Johnson, and Junius, contribute each his share to the one imposing result. In his youth, he was a slavish copyist of the lexicographer's pointed and pompous talk, as well as of his inordinate thirst for tea. The former folly he outgrew; but from the influence of the principle of imitation he never altogether escaped. He rarely writes without some model in his eye. His style, however, is matchless. Less easy than Addison's, it is at once more nervous and more polished. Less rolling and rhythmical than Johnson's, it is chaster, terser, and freer from mannerism. Not so varied, copious, unexpected, and conversational as Burke's, it is more careful, less capricious and unequal, nearly as eloquent, and entirely free from his frequent coarseness and Irish rant. Less elaborate than Junius, it is less laconic, less formal, less coolly fiendish, than the style of that "Spartan dog:" it is beautiful, without ever descending to the pretty; elegant, without approaching the neat; simple, but never weak; sublime, but never inflated; strong, without being harsh; terse, but never curt; clear and brilliant as crystal, it approaches the line which "trembles" on perfection. "It has," says Dugald Stewart, "all the beauties of Addison, Johnson, and Burke, without their imperfections." Frequently imitated, it is the most unapproachable of styles. While it presents not a single point to the caricaturist, it drives the imitator to despair. If it has any faults, they lie in a tone of majesty too uniformly sustained—in a slight occasional mannerism in the construction of his sentences—in the want of that charm which airy negligence, if it avoid affectation, can give to diction, as well as to the motion of a birch waving in the wind, and which delights us in Hume and Goldsmith. His imagination, again, is cast in a medium between the gorgeous and the tame. It is more that of the orator than the poet. Even its darings are rather those of the excited speaker, than of the wild-eyed bard. It is not a teeming and exhaustless faculty, like that of Jeremy Taylor, Burke, Curran, and Wilson. Nor is it a profound, though limited power, like that of Wordsworth, Chalmers, and Foster. Nor is it a turbid, earthy, but fertile source, like that of Warburton and Andrew Thomson. It is a high, pure, and cultivated energy, equal to the demands of his intellect, and nothing more; illustrative, rather than combinative; epical, rather than dramatic; refined, rather than rich; select, not copious. It is an imagination resembling that of Thomas Campbell or Lord Jeffrey more than any other distinguished writer of the day. His taste, too, is exquisitely exclusive. It can bear nothing *outré*, nothing extravagant; it is impatient of all eccentricities—save his own. We could have anticipated it beforehand to revel in Milton, Bossuet, and Howe; to bear with Shakspere—to shrink from Coleridge—to loathe Byron—to abuse Pollok—and to hold in hate and suspicion all the miracles of modern poetry. We know how it estimated Edward Irving, and the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm." We can conceive what opinion it would (at the first blush) form of Thomas Carlyle, with his monstrous compound epithets, and his contempt and defiance of all the ordinary canons of criticism. We fancy we hear him saying—the big-browed, keen-eyed man—of the "French Revolution, a history," "Sir, it is a very clever book in its own way; but if he's right, the rest are all wrong, sir. If Tacitus, Hume, Robertson, and M'Crie, be historians, sir, he is none." We must not omit, while enumerating his intellectual qualities, to notice his wit, which, we think, discovers the fertility and power of his mind more than his serious writing. We find striking specimens of it in the conversational fragments which have been preserved; and also in his political writings and his reviews. It is as sparkling and pointed as

Johnson's, and far more broad and daring. He carried it with him to the madhouse. It is told, that when visited in his confinement by some person he did not like, and who asked him, in a whining tone of affected condolence, "What brought you here, Mr Hall?" touching his brow, Hall answered, "What'll never bring you, sir—too much brain." Sometimes his love of point hurried him to the brink of the profane. Talking of Dr Ryland, he said once, "Why, sir, Dr Ryland's all piety; all piety together, sir. If there were not room in heaven, God would turn out an archangel for him." No one, save Hall, could or would have said this. "Is it true, Mr Hall, that you are to marry Miss So-and-so?" "I marry Miss So-and-so! I would as soon marry Beelzebub's eldest daughter, and go home and live with the *old folks*." Frequently his repartee is less happy than it is bold, as in calling Dr Owen a "continent of mud." Yet what can be better than his reply to Horsley, who, for his political opponents, had offered up a prayer in the spirit of an indictment, "Miserable men, they are yet in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity" "Plenty of the first article," he says, "they must have, after he has distilled his own; and if the bonds of iniquity are not added, it is only because they are not within the reach of his mighty malice." Many other specimens, published and unpublished, might be given, but let these suffice.

Of his separate productions we can speak but shortly. They are at best only faint though characteristic, revelations of his mind; footprints, not images. His reluctance to write became ultimately unconquerable. His finest effusions he could hardly be prevailed on to publish. When printed, he spoke of them with uniform indifference or contempt; nay, in more morbid moods, he has been known to proceed to the extremities of hiding, tearing, or committing them to the flames. This is often, though not always, characteristic of high genius. Milton did not act nor feel thus; nor did Wordsworth. Indeed, we are inclined to trace such conduct to disease, or to fastidiousness; and to wonder at, rather than admire it. If productions are written with earnestness, men have a motive to love them, altogether apart from literary vanity. Of his "Apology for the Liberty of the Press," and his sermon on "Infidelity," we have said somewhat already. The first has more juvenile warmth, the other more repose and finish. Both are radiant with eloquence; both are sketchy and imitative; neither is complete nor satisfactory; and in point of political sentiment, the one is little else than a clever reply to the other. The finest image in the former, "the empire of darkness and despotism has been smitten with a stroke which resounded through the universe," is borrowed from Grattan. His sermon on the "Present Crisis" (the French Invasion) took, at the time, the head of a long catalogue of discourses on the subject, including one of Alison's most elaborate productions; and it still appears to us his best—the most original in thought, and manly in diction. Never was the doctrine of expediency, "holding her balance with a hand which never trembles in the midst of the greatest horrors," denounced with more lofty and indignant censure. And when he comes to exhort his countrymen to battle, the "thing becomes a trumpet." The mantle of Tyrtæus descends upon him, and his eloquence swells, and widens, and rushes on in a torrent of fire. His discourse on "War" is beautiful, but faint—written in water, when he should have dipped his pencil in blood. Passing over others of inferior merit, we cannot omit noticing two of a softer and gentler character—those on the death of the Princess Charlotte and of Dr Ryland. They reach the ideal of funeral sermons. They are not elaborate, or theatrical, or pompous, or fulsome, like the eulogies and *oraisons funebres* of the French; and in tenderness of pathos, beauty of language, and exquisite moral application, they stand alone. And how much does it say for our author, that, while almost all the powerful spirits in Britain poured lamentations over the "mother of a moment" (Byron in his gorgeous verse, Chalmers in the meridian of his reputation, and John

Wilson in the dawn of his promise), Hall's tribute was, by acclamation, judged the best, and is perhaps the only one quite worthy of the dread catastrophe. His "Posthumous Sermons" are not, as a whole, worthy of his fame. They are skeletons; some of them Titanic, it is true, as witness the two on the "Divine Concealment," but lacking such flesh, and blood, and clothing as he could and would have conferred. Had this most fastidious of men foreseen the vast volumes of remains which were to be culled from the sweepings of his study and his soul, surely he would have left some special protest against such egregious book-making, such profane trafficking in the memory of the dead. As it is, it might almost rouse the bones in his sepulchre, and "warm with red resentment the wan cheek."

As a controversialist, his fame rests on two pamphlets, discussing, with much acuteness, the *questio vexata* of free communion. Their manner is mild, yet firm —their reasoning candid, whether it be convincing or not—their style, if it rarely rise to eloquence, is as elegant as usual, and abounds with his wonted *curiosa felicitas*. As a critic, he has written so well as to cause deep regret that he has not written more. Had he cultivated this field, Jeffrey might have been forced to look to his laurels. His discrimination, though not so profound as to qualify him for the intricacies of metaphysical controversy, is quite acute enough to render him an admirable judge, both of intellect and character; and except where violent prejudices paralyse his opinions, they are generally as generous as they are just. His reviews are not dry catalogues of qualities, but paintings, warm and flushed with life. By a few strong, yet delicate touches, he forms a likeness, and his style supplies a frame of gold. His satire, too, comes out prominently in these productions, and is all his own. It has been compared to that of Junius, but it is tenderer, less terse in its expression, and less Satanic in its spirit. It is not so truculent as Burke's, nor ever, like his, degenerates into invective. Less broad and bishop-like than Horsley's, it has a far finer and keener edge. It is not so heavy as Foster's, who frequently suffocates his own wit under the ponderosity of his words. Than Smith's, it is graver and less boisterous; than Jeffrey's, less attenuated and refined. The author of "Zeal without Innovation" had cause to remember him, and so had Belsham.

With the incidents of Hall's life and the main features of his character, every one is acquainted. We all know, from the prints, his personal appearance, full of rugged honesty, with deep lines of thought, and an aspect as of perpetual worship, with high sloping forehead, and large dark brilliant eye. Simplicity and sincerity were the leading traits of his character; which, besides, shone with the beauties of holiness. His faults were impetuosity of temper, and a habit of going daring lengths and using dangerous liberties in his talk. A distinguished Scottish divine, who visited him, expressed to us disappointment with his preaching, which was chiefly remarkable, he said, for the flow and facility with which fine and finished sentences issued from his lips; but added, that his conversational powers were unrivalled; and that, altogether, he was by far the most extraordinary specimen of human nature he had ever witnessed. He gave him the impression of a being detained among us by very slight and trembling ties, like a balloon the moment before it starts on its upward journey. The well-known story of Burke, that you could not go under a shed to shun a shower with him, without saying "that is an extraordinary man," seems to have been applicable in part to Hall. Some of the incidents in his life were very singular. Who has forgot the history of his courtship (not recorded in his biography): his going down to the kitchen of a brother minister, where his inamorata lived in the shape of a most respectable and pious domestic; his lighting the inseparable pipe; his question, "Betty, do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?" her answer, "I hope, sir, I do;" and his succeeding and conclusive query, "Betty, do you love me?" These were eccentricities. But there is one darker and more deli-

cate passage in his history, to which we may passingly refer. The partition which, in his case, Nature had made thin between genius and derangement, at length burst asunder. The majestic orb of his intellect librated, wavered, wandered, went utterly out of its course, and "yet the light that led astray was light from heaven." Hall's was no vulgar frenzy, no grinning, howling, and cursing mania; it was cometary in its character, fearful, but sublime. It brought out his faculties into broader and more vigorous play. The burning paw of madness laid on his brain did not sere up, but kindled his powers into lurid life. In the language of Lamb, applied to Lear, "the storm of frenzy turned up, and laid bare that sea, his mind, with all its vast riches;" he thought incessantly; all that he had read or knew came back, streaming, rushing like a tempest through his soul. The sun of his judgment, in health so vigorous and clear, was in eclipse; but, in its stead, glared his excited imagination round the sultry solitudes of his soul. He jested bitterly, as we have seen; declaimed powerfully. He preached magnificent sermons—would they had been caught from his foaming lips! He prayed fervent, unearthly prayers; and we can conceive no sight more affecting or more awfully grand, than that of his lofty spirit conversing with God through the cloud of madness; amid the eclipse of reason, still groping toward heaven; praying, shall we say, as an angel would pray, were his glorious faculties unhinged, by gazing too nearly and too ardently at the Schekinah! And if even a poor creature, like Christopher Smart, "who indeed," says Johnson, "went to the tavern, but was always carried home again," could, in an asylum, and with a key on the wall, write poetry almost as grand as Job or David; if Nat. Lee soared into sublimity, as he wrote his insane tragedies by the light of the moon; if every clown be a Shakspere in his dreams; if the speeches of ordinary men, in the brief and bright frenzy preceding the darkness of death, have far exceeded their capabilities in the day of health; if dramatists, and poets, and novelists, have dug some of their richest gems out of the mine of madness, and made their Lears and Ophelias, and Clementinas and Eustace Grays, talk an eloquence which has hardly a parallel in the written language of men, how vivid must have been the impressions, and how eloquent the ravings, in such circumstances, of such a being as Hall! It is a subject for the noblest painting or poetry; it is a subject for solemn reflection, for humble searchings of heart, for pity, and for tears. In the supposed necessary nearness of "great wit" to madness, we do not believe; but much less can we subscribe to Elia's paper on the sanity of true genius. The truth lies between. Frequently, we are afraid, frenzy lurks in the neighbourhood of a lofty mind, like a lion near a fount, waiting the moment for its fell spring. But that the workings of noble faculties always near the abhorred brink of insanity; that the towering sons of men are most apt to be crowned with the fire of madness—we shrink from supposing. Still less do we think that, in Hall's case, it was designed as a thorn in the flesh to humble his pride. This is a mere assumption, intolerable in worms. Who told them to cry out, "A judgment, a thorn?" Let us check our unbridled speculations, stifle our senseless curiosity, be humble, and look at home. Hall himself continued to look back upon this period with a certain melancholy and regretful interest. His mind then, he averred, had exhausted itself. Obliged to keep up with his fire-winged frenzy, how could it but be crippled! His memory had been overstrained; his imagination, especially, had suffered; he had come out from the cloud, not with face shining, but with locks shorn; much of his strength had departed, if he had not become weak as other men. Others said that, on the contrary, he was bettered by the affliction, and that his preaching improved in beauty and unction, if the power and splendour of his ancient style were for ever gone.

Alas! that, after all, his warmest admirers must admit that he has left behind him so little which can convey to posterity an adequate idea of his powers! Indolence; a sort of frantic fastidiousness; the pain produced by a calculus inserted on

his spine, and which no power of opium or ether could deaden; not to speak of his love of talk, the undisputed pre-eminence he enjoyed among his brethren, and the soft flatteries which were constantly steaming up around him from the tongues of females, males, and "old women" of both sexes, composing the small coterie over which he was called to preside (he who could have shone a dictator in the loftiest literary circles), besides the drain which two fits of frenzy made upon his mind, all combined not only to prevent him writing oftener, but to deaden and enfeeble him when he did. Hence, the most eloquent preacher and fastidious author of his age must be judged hereafter from fragments and fugitive pieces, and the testimony of personal friends, and the breath of floating reputation, instead of having enshrined his soul, as he could and should have done, in some extensive theological, or ethical, or literary work. Still he may, without hesitation, be pronounced one of the most remarkable men of the age. The place which he occupies in public estimation is not likely, indeed, to enlarge materially but will probably narrow; yet, as specimens of composition, his works may be proclaimed imperishable as the language in which they are written, and to the beauty and perfection of which they have so much contributed; and praise enough we count it "to fill the ambition of a private man," that *his* language is *our* mother tongue.

SECOND SITTING.

Robert Hall is a name we, in common with all Christians of this century, of all denominations, deeply venerate and admire. We are not, however, to be classed among his idolaters; and this paper is meant as a calm and comprehensive view of what appear to us, after many needful deductions from the over-estimates of the past, including our own in the foregoing paper, to be his real characteristics, both in point of merit, of fault, and of simple deficiency.

We labour, like all critics who have never seen their author, under considerable disadvantages. "Knowledge is power." Still more—craving Lord Bacon's pardon—"vision is power." Cæsar said a similar thing when he wrote *Vidi, vici.* To see is to conquer, if you happen to have the faculty of clear, full, conclusive sight. In other cases, the sight of a man whom you misappreciate, and, though you have eyes, cannot see, is a curse to your conception of his character. You look at him through a mist of prejudice, which discolours his visage, and, even when it exaggerates, distorts his stature. Far otherwise with the prepared, yet unprepossessed look of intelligent love. Love hears a voice others cannot hear, and sees a hand others cannot see. In every man of genius, besides what he says, and the direct exhibition he gives of the stores of his mind, there is a certain indescribable something—a preponderance of personal influence—a mesmeric affection—a magical charm. You feel that a great spirit is beside you, even though he be talking mere commonplace, or toying with children. Just as, when you are walking through a wood at the foot of a mountain, you do not see the mountain, you see only glimpses of it, but you know it is there; in the fine old word, you are "aware" of its presence; and, having once seen (as one who has newly lost his burden continues for a little to imagine it on his shoulders still), you fancy you are still seeing it. This pressure of personal interest and power always dwindles works in the presence of their authors, suggests their possible ideal of performance, and starts the question, What folio or library of folios can enclose *that soul?* The soul itself of the great man often responds to this feeling—takes up all its past doings as a little thing—"paws" like the war-horse in Job after higher achievements—and, like Byron, pants for a lightning-language, a quicker, fierier cypher, "that it may wreak its thought upon expression;" but is forced, like him, to exclaim,

"But, as it is, I live and die unheard,
With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword."

Those who met and conversed with Robert Hall seem all to have felt this singular personal charm — this stream of "virtue going out of him"—this necessary preponderance over his company. Nor was this entirely the effect of the pomp and loftiness of his manner and bearing, although both were loftier than perhaps beseemed his Christian character. We have known, indeed, men of mediocre, and less than mediocre talents, exerting an uneasy and crushing influence over far superior persons, through the sheer power of a certain stiff and silent pomp, added to an imposing personal appearance. We know, too, some men of real genius, whose overbearing haughtiness and determination to take the lead in conversation render them exceedingly disagreeable to many, disgusting to some, and yet command attention, if not terror, from all. But Robert Hall belonged to neither of these classes. He might rather be ranked with those odd characters, whose mingled genius and eccentricity compel men to listen to them, and whose pomp, and pride, and overbearing temper, and extravagant bursts, are pardoned, as *theirs*, and because they are counterbalanced by the qualities of their better nature.

We have met with some of those who have seen and heard him talk and preach, and their accounts have coincided in this —that he was latterly more powerful in the parlour than in the pulpit. He was more at ease in the former. He had his pipe in his mouth, his tea-pot beside him, eager ears listening to catch his every whisper—bright eyes raining influence on him; and, under these varied excitements, he was sure to shine. His spirits rose, his wit flashed, his keen and pointed sentences thickened, and his auditors began to imagine him a Baptist Burke, or a Johnson Redivivus, and to wish that Boswell were to undergo a resurrection too. In these evening parties he appeared, we suspect, to greater advantage than in the mornings, when ministers from all quarters called to see the Lion of Leicester, and tried to tempt him to roar by such questions as, "Whether do you think, Mr Hall, Cicero or Demosthenes the greater orator?" "Was Burke the author of 'Junius?'" "Whether is Bentham or Wilberforce the leading spirit of the age?" &c. &c. How Hall kept his gravity or his temper, under such a fire of queries, not to speak of the smoke of the half-putrid incense amid which it came forth, we cannot tell. He was, however, although a vehement and irritable, a very polite man; and, like Dr Johnson, he "loved to fold his legs, and have his talk out." Many of his visiters, too, were really distinguished men, and were sure, when they returned home, to circulate his repartees, and spread abroad his fame. Hence, even in the forenoons, he sometimes said brilliant things, many of which have been diligently collected by the late excellent Dr Balmer and others, and are to be found in his memoirs.

Judging by these specimens, our impression of his conversational powers is distinct and decided. His talk was always rapid, ready, clear, and pointed—often brilliant, not unfrequently wild and daring. He said more good and memorable things in the course of an evening than perhaps any talker of his day. To the power of his talk it contributed that his state of body required constant stimulus. Owing to a pain in his spine, he was obliged to swallow daily great quantities of ether and laudanum, not to speak of his favourite potion, tea. This had the effect of keeping him strung up always to the highest pitch; and, while never intoxicated, he was everlastingly excited. Had he been a feebler man in body and mind, the *regimen* would have totally unnerved him. As it was, it added greatly to the natural brilliance of his conversational powers, although sometimes it appears to have irritated his temper, and to have provoked ebullitions of passion, and hasty, unguarded statement. It was in such moods that he used to abuse Coleridge, Wordsworth, Southey, Pollok, and Edward Irving. He often, too, talked for effect; and his judgments were sometimes exceedingly capricious and self-contradictory. Society was essential to him. It relieved that "permanent shade of gloom" which the

acute eye of Foster saw lying on his soul. He rushed to it as into his native air; and, once there, he sometimes talked for victory and display, and often on subjects with which he was very imperfectly acquainted. We cannot wonder that, when he met on one occasion with Coleridge, they did not take to each other. Both had been accustomed to lead in conversation; and, like two suns in one sky, they began to "fight in their courses," and made the atmosphere too hot to hold them. Coleridge, although not so ready, rapid, and sharp, was far profounder, wider, and more suggestive in his conversation. Hall's talk, like his style, consisted of rather short, pointed, and balanced periods. Coleridge talked, as he wrote, in long, linked, melodious, and flowing, but somewhat rambling and obscure paragraphs. The one talked; the other lectured. The one was a lively, sparkling stream; the other a great, slow, broad, and lipful river.

A gentleman in Bradford described to us a day he once spent there with Hall. It was a day of much enjoyment and excitement. At the close of it Hall felt exceedingly exhausted; and, ere retiring to rest, asked the landlady for a wine-glass half-full of brandy. "Now," he says, "I am about to take as much laudanum as would kill all this company; for if I don't, I won't sleep one moment." He filled the glass with strong laudanum; went to bed; enjoyed a refreshing rest; and came down to breakfast the next morning, "the most majestic-looking man" our informant ever saw: his brow calm and grand; his eye bright; his air serene; and his step and port like those of a *superior being*, condescending to touch this gross planet. He described his conversation as worthy of his presence—the richest and most sparkling essence he ever imbibed withal. Yet his face was far from being a handsome one. Indeed, it reminded some people of an *exaggerated frog's*. But the amplitude of his forehead, the brilliance of his eye, and the strength and breadth of his chest, marked him out always from the roll of common men, and added greatly to the momentum both of his conversation and his preaching.

His preaching has been frequently described, but generally by those who heard him in the decline of his powers. It came to a climax in Cambridge, and was never so powerful after his derangement. To have heard him in Cambridge, must have been a treat almost unrivalled in the history of pulpit oratory. In the prime of youth and youthful strength, "hope still rising before him, like a fiery column, *the dark side not yet turned;*" his fancy exuberant; his language less select, perhaps, but more energetic and abundant than in later days; full of faith without fanaticism, and of ardour without excess of enthusiasm; with an eye like a coal of fire; a figure, strong, erect, and not yet encumbered with corpulence; a voice not loud, but sweet, and which ever and anon "trembled" below his glorious sentences and images, and an utterance rapid as a mountain torrent—did this young apostle stand up, and, to an audience as refined and intellectual as could then be assembled in England, "preach Christ and him crucified." Sentence followed sentence, each more brilliant than its forerunner, like Venus succeeding Jupiter in the sky, and Luna drowning Venus; shiver after shiver of delight followed each other through the souls of the hearers, till they wondered "whereunto this thing should grow," and whether they were in the body or out of the body they could hardly tell. To use the fine words of John Scott, "he unveiled the mighty foundations of the Rock of Ages, and made their hearts vibrate with a strange joy, which they shall recognise in loftier stages of their existence." What a pity that, with the exception of his sermon on "Modern Infidelity," all these Cambridge discourses have irrecoverably perished.

This, however, like Chalmers's similar splendid career in the Tron Church, Glasgow, could not last for ever. Hall became over-excited, perhaps over-elated, and his majestic mind departed from men for a season. When he "came back to us," much of his power and eloquence was gone. His joy of being, too, was lessened. He became a sadder and a

wiser man. He no longer rushed exulting to the pulpit, as the horse to the battle. He "spake trembling in Israel." He had, in his derangement, got a glimpse of the dark mysteries of existence, and was humbled in the dust under the recollection of it. He had met, too, with some bitter disappointments. His love to a most accomplished and beautiful woman was not returned; fierce spasms of agony ran ever and anon through his body; the terrible disease of madness continued to hang over him all his life long, like the sword of Damocles, by a single hair. All this contributed to soften, and also somewhat to weaken his spirit. His preaching became the mild sunset of what it had been. The power, richness, and fervour of his ancient style were for ever gone.

We have heard his latter mode of preaching often described by eye-witnesses. He began in a low tone of voice; as he proceeded, his voice rose and his rapidity increased; the first two-thirds of his sermon consisted of statement or argument; when he neared the close, he commenced a strain of appeal, and then, and not till then, was there any eloquence; then his stature erected itself, his voice swelled to its utmost compass, his rapidity became prodigious, and his practical questions—poured out in thick succession—seemed to sound the very souls of his audience. Next to the impressiveness of the conclusion, what struck a stranger most was the exquisite beauty and balance of his sentences; every one of which seemed quite worthy of, and ready for, the press. Sometimes, indeed, he was the tamest and most commonplace of preachers, and men left the church wondering if this were actually the illustrious man.

His Sermons, in their printed form, next demand our consideration. Their merits, we think, have been somewhat exaggerated hitherto, and are likely, in the coming age, to be rated too low. It cannot be fairly maintained that they exhibit a great native original mind like Foster's, or that they are full, as a whole, of rich suggestive thought. The thinking in them is never mere commonplace; but it never rises into rare originality. In general, he aims only at the elegant and the beautiful, and is seldom sublime. He is not the Moses, or the Milton, or the Young—only the Pope, of preachers. Like Pope, his *forte* is refined sense, expressed in exquisite language. In conversation, he often ventured on daring flights, but seldom in his writings. While reading them, so cool is the strain of thought—so measured the writing—so perfect the self-command—so harmoniously do the various faculties of the writer work together—that you are tempted to ask, How could the author of this ever have been mad?

We are far from wishing, by such remarks, to derogate from the merit of these remarkable compositions. For, if not crowded with thought or copious in imagination, and if somewhat stiff, stately, and monotonous in style, they are at once very masculine in thinking, and very elegant in language. If he seldom reaches the sublime, he never condescends to the pretty, or even the neat. He is always graceful, if not often grand. A certain sober dignity distinguishes all his march, and now and then he trembles into touches of pathos or elevated sentiment, which are as felicitous as they are delicate. Some of the fragments he has left behind him discover, we think, more of the strong, bold conception, and the *vis vivida* of genius, than his more polished and elaborate productions. Such are his two sermons on the "Divine Concealment." But in all his works you see a mind which had ventured too far, and had overstrained its energies, in early manhood, and which had come back to cower timidly in its native nest.

It were wasting time to dwell on sermons so well known as those of Hall. We prefer that on the death of Dr Ryland, as more characteristic of his distinguishing qualities of dignified sentiment, graceful pathos, and calm, majestic eloquence. In his "Infidelity," and "War," and the "Present Crisis," he grapples with subjects unsuited, on the whole, to his genius, and becomes almost necessarily an imitator, particularly of Burke—whose mind

possessed all those qualities of origination, power over the terrible, and boundless fertility, in which Hall's was deficient. But in Ryland you have *himself;* and we fearlessly pronounce that sermon the most classical and beautiful strain of pulpit eloquence in the English language.

Hall, as a thinker, never had much power over the age, and that seems entirely departed. Even as a writer he is not now so much admired. The age is getting tired of measured periods, and is preferring a more conversational and varied style. He has founded no school, and left few stings in the hearts of his hearers. Few have *learned* much from him. Yet, as specimens of pure English, expressing evangelical truth in musical cadence, his sermons and essays have their own place, and it is a high one, among the classical writings of the age.

Hall, as we have intimated, had a lofty mien, and was thought by many, particularly in a first interview, rather arrogant and overbearing. But this was only the hard outside shell of his manner; beneath, there were profound humility, warm affections, and child-like piety. He said that he "*enjoyed* everything." But this capacity of keen enjoyment was, as often in other cases, linked to a sensitiveness and morbid acuteness of feeling which made him at times very melancholy. He was, like all thinkers, greatly perplexed by the mysteries of existence, and grieved at the spectacles of sin and misery in this dark valley of tears. He was like an angel, who had lost his way from heaven, and his wings with it, and who was looking perpetually upwards with a sigh, and longing to return. We heard, some time ago, one striking story about him. He had been seized with that dire calamity, which had once before laid him aside from public duty, and had been quietly removed to a country-house. By some accident his door had been left unlocked, and Hall rushed out from bed into the open air. It was winter, and there was thick snow on the ground. He stumbled amid the snow, and the sudden shock on his half-naked body restored him to consciousness. He knelt down in the snow, and, looking up to heaven, exclaimed, "Lord, what is man?" To the constant fear of this malady, and to deep and melancholy thoughts on man and man's destiny, was added what Foster calls an "apparatus of torture" within him—a sharp calculus in his spine—a thorn in the flesh, or rather in the *bone.* Yet against all this he manfully struggled, and his death at last might be called a victory. It took him away from the perplexities of this dim dawn of being, where the very light is as darkness—from almost perpetual pain, and from the shadow of the grimmest Fear that can hang over humanity—and removed him to those regions mild of calm and serene air, of which he loved to discourse, where no cloud stains the eternal azure of the holy soul—where doubt is as impossible as disbelief or darkness—and where God, in all the grandeur of his immensity, but in all the softness of his love, is for ever unveiled. There his friends Foster and Chalmers have since joined him; and it is impossible not to form delightful conjectures as to their meeting each other, and holding sweet and solemn fellowship in that blessed region. "Shall we know each other in heaven?" is a question often asked. And yet why should it be doubted for a moment? Do the brutes know each other on earth, and shall not the saints in heaven? Yes! that notion of a re-union which inspired the soul of Cicero, which made poor Burns exult in the prospect of his meeting with his dear lost Highland Mary, and which Hall, in the close of his sermon on Ryland, has covered with the mild glory of his immortal eloquence, is no dream or delusion. It is one of the "true sayings of God," and there is none of them more cheering to the soul of the struggler here below. These three master spirits have met, and what a meeting it has been! The spirit of Foster has lost that sable garment which suspicious conjecture, prying curiosity, and gloomy temperament had woven for it here, and his "raiment doth shine as the light." Chalmers has recovered from the wear and tear of that long battle and life of tempestuous action which was his lot on

earth. And Hall's thorn rankles no longer in his side, and all his fears and forebodings have passed away. The long day of eternity is before them all, and words fail us, as we think of the joy with which they anticipate its unbounded pleasures, and prepare for its unwearying occupations. They are above the clouds that encompassed them once, and they hear the thunders, that once terrified or scathed them, muttering harmlessly far, far below. Wondrous their insight, deep their joy, sweet their reminiscences, ravishing their prospects. But their hearts are even humbler than when they were on earth; they never weary of saying, "Not unto us, not unto us;" and the song never dies away on their lips, any more than on those of the meanest and humblest of the saved, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood, be glory and honour, dominion and power, for ever and ever. Amen."

EDWARD IRVING,

AND THE PREACHERS OF THE DAY.

WHAT is preaching? is a question to which there would probably be as many replies as to, what is truth? Almost every minister, and almost every man, has his own taste, and his own standard, and his own weight, and his own measure on this subject. One man thinks, that to preach means accurately to divide a given topic, logically to illustrate it, and to observe a perfect but cold propriety through the various steps and stages of the discourse. This is the mechanical plan of preaching. Another imagines preaching to be the exposition of a particular passage of Scripture, bringing out from it all that is in it, and nothing more. This is the textual idea of preaching. Another cares not a straw for a sermon, if it do not contain a train of rigid argumentation, diversified by occasional bursts of party rage, and strong squirts of the *odium theologicum*. This is the polemical idea of preaching. Another likes no preaching but what contains a string of appeals, and queries, and adjurations, unconnected with principles, unsupported by reasoning, and loose as a rope of sand. This is called, though falsely, practical preaching. Another wants a sermon to be a series of electrical shocks — one burst from beginning to end; the clouds returning after the rain, and no cotton so thick, and no conscience so hard, as to exclude or resist the perpetual tumult. This is the clap-trap idea of preaching. Another wants flowers, whether natural and fresh from the soil, or artificial and faded, it does not matter; if he do but get flowers, and hear them rustling about his ears, in the breeze of brilliant declamation, he is quite satisfied, whether they keep him languishingly awake, or lull him into dreamy repose. This is the florid, or Corinthian idea of preaching. Another is content with exclamations: he is not pleased unless every other sentence begin with Oh; the interjection Ah has to him a peculiarly pathetic sound: it seems to melt into his midriff like snow; and that preacher would be his Magnus Apollo, who should say, "Oh, we remark in the next place." This is the interjectional idea of preaching. Another desiderates chiefly delivery: no minister is a favourite unless his voice be musical, and his attitude smack of the boards; unless he indulge in a profusion of studied declamation, pointing to the four winds when he names them, and laying his hand gently on the heart, when he wishes to indicate that interesting organ. This is the material or "Anthropomorphic" idea of preaching. Another judges of a sermon by its length, and likes it, either because it is an hour, or because it is only the half of the time. This is the arithmetical idea of preaching. One man abuses a sermon, because he does not un-

derstand it; another admires it, because he does understand it; and a third admires it, *because* he does not understand it. One man constantly asks, ere giving his verdict, what do the best judges say? another, with some favourite model in his eye, says, what is this to Hall, or Chalmers, or Thomson? One man likes a discourse to be as full of ideas as a pudding of plums; another prefers a sermon in which the gold, or even the brass, is beat so thin, that it trembles before the zephyr; a third likes one great, general idea to pervade a sermon, and to gather round it, by the force of attraction, a host of illustrations. One likes a discourse endlessly subdivided, all hedges and ditches; another would have it limitless, free, and unenclosed, as a moor or a mountain. One wishes it to be gemmed with Scripture, and with nothing else; another likes to see the Cairngorm pebbles of earthly poetry sparingly intermixed with the inestimable jewels of celestial song. One would hem a sermon in within very straightlaced limitations; another would allow it a wide and varied range: to draw illustrations from the meanest and from the loftiest objects—from the flower and the star—from the ant and the leviathan—from the glow-worm under the hedge, and from the final conflagration. And so on, *ad infinitum*. What our idea of preaching is we do not mean at present to state; but, in lieu of this, to sketch, rapidly, in addition to our two preceding papers, the characters of some of the principal preachers of the day, closing with the greatest of them all—one who "strove," says Carlyle, "to be a Christian priest in an age most alien to the character"—one who reminded the subtle Coleridge of Luther and Paul—one who stormed on the solitary whirlwind of his eloquence into the very heart of London popularity, and hovered there, unequalled and unapproached, till his own wild breath turned the current—one whose errors were all of the blood, and none of the spirit—the Herculean, misguided, but magnificent man, Edward Irving.

We may begin with the late Dr Andrew Thomson. Rarely has there been a man in Scotland whose bodily and mental lineaments made so distinct and definite an impression upon the public mind. There could be no mistake about him. He was one of the best representatives of the national intellect and the national character which has ever appeared. No dreaming pedant, no vain declaimer, was he. An intense virility marked all the structure of his understanding, and strung together all the nerves of his soul. His intellect, if not of the profoundest cast, was one of the strongest and clearest that ever wrought. His logic, untaught by the schools, and disdaining their petty jargons, was the mere result of this masculine understanding. His common sense was of that quick instinctive kind which verges on genius. His learning was not exceedingly varied or profound, but what he knew he knew thoroughly, and could use with complete and absolute mastery. Disdaining, perhaps too much, mysticism, as well as refinement, he struck on all the hard, strong points of his subject. His memory was enormous; his command of it was still more remarkable. His language was the perfect organ of his mind—always sharp, and clear, and strong, and knotty, frequently eloquent, never soft, and seldom beautiful. His sarcasm wanted the refinement and condensed accumulated bitterness of Junius (whom he read continually), but was steeped in a broad and original humour. His invective could be now as overbearing as Horsley's, and now as rancorous as Burke's. His imagination was strong, but far inferior to his intellect. Fancy he had little or none. His diction was seldom coloured; and the colours he did use were often coarse. His power over the sterner passions was great: over the finer feelings, limited. Pity he seldom produced: terror often, but generally by the reiteration of the strong facts of Scripture—seldom by the aggregation of energetic images of his own. He had little poetry in his blood, but he had much music; his own voice was a fine instrument, giving out rather level vigorous tones than soft cadences or lofty bursts of sound. All these

various powers were plunged, not into the pool of imagination, but into the *genium perfervidum Scotorum*—into the passions of a hot and noble heart. As a preacher, with few shining points or breathless bursts, or rapid and kindling splendour, with no recondite trains of reasoning, with no violent appeals to feeling, with little imagery, and with less declamation, he was simple, searching, scriptural, strong. The subject lay before him, and he transferred his view of it fully and easily to his audience. The march of his mind through his discourse was not forced or rapid, neither was it slow and reluctant: it was moderate, masterly, grave, and majestic. The heat he felt and kindled was not of furnace fierceness, but steady and growing. His argument in the pulpit was clear; his reply to objections signally short, rapid, and conclusive; his appeals at the close irresistible. He always commanded attention; and he often produced deep and permanent effect. If he disappointed the lovers of the gaudy, the ornamental, the far-fetched, and the convulsive, he pleased the pious, he enlightened the ignorant, he satisfied the inquiring, he overawed the sceptical; "and fools who came to laugh remained to pray."

As a platform speaker, he allowed himself greater scope and liberty. He gave his wit full play; and who that ever heard, has forgot its side-splitting coruscations? How did he, in his playful ire, delight to scarify the unlucky dunderheads who crossed his terrible *via*. It was then,

> "Hurrah! hurrah! avoid the way of the avenging Childe."

Often, however, his coarseness, his virulence, the bull-dog tenacity with which he pinned down his victim to the earth, and the reckless audacity of his assertions, injured the effect he intended, and produced sympathy, instead of sneers. In his speeches, he rarely meddled with general principles: with their energies he could not grapple, nor unfold their consequences; but then, how he did deal with particular facts! It were hard to tell whether the minuteness with which he recollected, or the logical clearness with which he stated them, were the more admirable. On the platform, his oratory came out in all its manly splendour. He delighted in the stimulus, the badgering, and the excitement of a public meeting. His nerve was never so great as when turning up his brawny face against a storm of attack; and the knife of his opponents alone could bring out the purest and richest blood of his eloquence. At the close of a train of triumphant argumentation, and having obtained thus the confidence, and commanded the respect, of his hearers, there were no darings of declamation which he might not successfully attempt. Then it was that he could carry all before him by that splendid piece of egotism, "There is a reward for my assertions here, and there is a reward for them *yonder!*" pointing to the heaven which was, ere long, to receive him into its bosom. Then it was that he could electrify his audience by the burst, "Give me the hurricane, rather than the pestilence;" a figure only inferior to Lord Erskine's (from which it was unquestionably imitated), "Tempests may shake our dwellings and dissipate our commerce, but they scourge before them the *lazy elements* which otherwise would stagnate into pestilence." On such occasions, he rose above his pulpit-level; he laid about him as a man inspired; he proved that there is no oratory so impressive as that into which an intellectual man is roused and betrayed. He left an impression upon the souls and tingling ears of his auditors which many of them will carry to the grave; and, as the sun broadens and becomes a more imaginative object when near the setting, so was it with his eloquence, which never assumed a phase of more mellow and majestic splendour than when the orator stood a devoted man on the brink of the great precipice, and when his tongue was about to be arrested and stiffened for ever in the frost of death.

As a writer, we do not deem him destined for enduring reputation. Not merely

has he bequeathed no elaborate or complete work, but there are few separable passages which might survive the works to which they belonged. His works were all written for, and admirably adapted to, the nonce; but lack that tight compression which is the life of so many productions, and, as a whole, are destitute of the preserving salt of original genius.

The last time we saw him was in the year 1829, at a little bridge near the source of the River Earn, in Perthshire. He had come up from Dunira to fish; and there he was, eyeing the stream with as much determined pertinacity as though he were mauling a shoal of Apocryphists, and more eager, apparently, to get a glorious nibble in the Earn, than ever he was to awaken a cheer in the Assembly Rooms. We think we see him now, his massive face bent downwards, his eye gleaming with almost boyish eagerness, the fishing-rod held firmly and strongly in his nervous hand. The fish would not take; and, after some vain efforts, he stalked away, with an aspect and attitude of impatience. We saw him no more. Alas, the winding-sheet was even then well up on his breast! That manly fisher had meddled with more troubled waters than those of the Earn—darker passions than angling had possessed his soul; his constitution sunk and his "heart cracked" beneath their fury. In 1831 he died—and died in a moment; but not till he had made himself a name imperishable as shall be the freedom of the Negro, and glorious as the unadulterated Book of God.

Dr Gordon's popularity was, at one time, nearly as great as Dr Thomson's, though founded upon quite another basis. Gordon's sphere was solely the pulpit, and his appearance was much in his favour. Beautiful was the repose of his lofty brow, dark eye, and aspect of soft and melancholy meaning. It was "sunlight sheathed." It was a face from which every evil and earthly passion seemed purged His eye, in Aird's fine language, was "as a prophet's burdened eye." A deep gravity lay upon his countenance, which had the solemnity, without the sternness, of one of our old reformers. You could almost fancy a halo completing its apostolic character. This calm and reverend aspect was generally retained through the whole course of his preaching, though sometimes, under high excitement, it threw out a more intense and eloquent meaning. We were never so fortunate as to hear him in his best days, but have abundant testimony to the force and impression of his oratory. His matter was never brilliant, but generally weighty and instructive. He excelled in lecturing, as might have been expected, from the close, clear character of his mind, and its training. His reasoning was candid and comprehensive, but never subtle, and inferior to that of Horsley or Thomson in manliness and mastery;—of imagination he was nearly devoid. His passion is great, but its source lay deep, and it required unusual circumstances to bring it up. Seldom impassioned, he was always in earnest. His style was his own—no echo—no duplicate—but entirely and absolutely the expression of his intellect. This, in truth, is its sole merit. It is destitute of the gay colours of fancy—has no beauty, and little *lucidus ordo*. His sermons were, at first, voted a disappointment, though they have passed since through four or five editions. They contain, indeed, much good matter, but few striking things—are heavy and lumbering—have no marked and memorable passages—no "single stones of lustre from the brook"—no gleams of profound or original thought. You miss, as you read them, the charm of the man's gravity—the solemn and sepulchral notes of his voice—the point communicated by his eye—the meaning, which lies like still winter sunshine upon his lofty forehead, and the eloquence of the thin and silvery locks which cluster round it.

Of Drs Candlish, Cunninghame, Guthrie, of the Free Church, and Drs Cook, Robertson, &c., of the Established Church, not being able to speak from personal observation, we prefer not to speak at all. Of Dr Chalmers we speak at large afterwards. We pass to a special favourite of ours, the Rev. John Bruce, of Free St Andrew's Church. The first feeling with which he was saluted in Edinburgh was

that of general disappointment. His size was rather diminutive, his voice harsh, his accent pure Forfar, his style complicated and perplexed, his action *outré* and extravagant. But, with all those disadvantages, it was soon discovered that Bruce was a bold, independent thinker, and had the power of thrilling his audience through and through; in short, that he was a man of genius. We remember visiting his chapel a good many years ago. Our expectations, as usually happens, had prepared us for something altogether different from the real *bonâ fide* man. We expected a florid declaimer—there was not, so it happened, one figure or flower in the whole lecture. We expected a high-wrought style—we got no style at all; his discourse was one long, loose, lumbering sentence. We expected great fire of action and utterance—on that particular morning, he read, in a rather rapid, but quite excited manner; once or twice, indeed, he uttered some favourite word with strong emphasis; and accompanied it with a glare of his eye. His matter seemed, to us, to be rather a roundabout way of arriving at ordinary truth, than absolutely new. On the whole, we were disappointed. We came back, however, and learned at length to feel the admiration which not a few were counterfeiting. We found that this first had not been a full or favourable specimen of his preaching; that, in fact, he had three manners and styles: first, the impalpably obscure; secondly, the darkness visible; and, thirdly, the luminous and lofty. Sometimes his soul was wading through its subject, and you saw vigorous motion without definite result. And singular it was to see the man getting the more animated and furious as he became the more obscure—fighting desperately with the shadows of his own thoughts—floundering amid a "sunless sea" of strange and dreamy speculation; and at last confessing, with genuine *naïveté*, "that he feared he had not made himself perfectly intelligible." This, however, was his worst manner. At other times, even if he did not keep quite clear throughout the whole course of his argument—if now and then he dipped out of sight, he was sure to come up at the close, and, by some striking burst or figure, to add a fiery sting to the long and serpentine coil of his thought. We remember him closing a metaphysical discussion on the nature and attempted proof of the eternity of faith, by the following words: —"But for faith, the righteous would have no security for the continuance of their heavenly joy;—but for faith, they would stop and tremble on the streets of the New Jerusalem, lest these New Heavens should pass away, and that New Earth be melted with fervent heat." The effect was electric. Another time, speaking of the importance of the doctrine of Christ's Deity, he thus broke out:—"Were a conspiracy formed in hell to destroy the planetary system, how would they carry it into execution? Would they first seek to blot out one planet, and then another? No; but by a master blow they would strike the sun from the centre. So would the deniers of the divinity of Jesus." Such bursts, brief, unexpected, spring out in a moment, with volcanic fury, and as suddenly subsiding into the dark, stern groundwork of his discourses, had a peculiar power in awakening attention, in relieving the dry train of his reasonings, and burning in the results of his long processes of thought upon the mind and memory. And we liked to see his mind working itself up into one of those paroxysms, catching convulsively at some new and striking illustration, and, amid dead silence, labouring to set it before the audience in all its breadth and brilliance: his face, the while, flushing with a dusky fire —his eye kindling like an angry star—his voice almost yelling out its words—his head bending low to the writing before him—his small figure distending and dilated by his emotion, and the foam of his furor flying off from his lips upon his manuscript, and far away among the assembly! The strangest thing about such jets of eloquence was the suddenness with which they arose. This moment, the man was perfectly calm, pursuing, perhaps, a cold and misty train of reasoning; in five minutes, he was in a half-mad state of excitement—his whole being in combustion,

and his audience jerked suddenly away with him, like the passengers in a railway train, who, in a few moments, exchange perfect rest for impetuous motion. Once, in particular, we recollect him preaching on the words, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." He was investigating, after his usual fashion, the nature of sonship. The audience were altogether unmoved and listless, when, of a sudden, the preacher's voice began to rise; his face was flushing in the coming storm; he had got hold of some racy illustration, or, rather, it had got hold of him, for, during the five following minutes, we have seldom seen a speaker so thoroughly possessed and filled by an idea; it "tore him as fire tears a thunder-cloud;" he absolutely shrieked out his words—the most listless were aroused, and the whole audience almost trembled at the excitement of the speaker, without, perhaps, fully perceiving his meaning, or comprehending the sudden spring which, touched by the hand of his demon, had set him off at such a rate. The idea he brought out was to the following effect:—Were a riotous rabble collected amid the darkness of the night, and were the officers of the law breaking in upon and dispersing them, would they concern themselves about bringing the miscreants to their homes? No—they cared not whether the poor beings had homes at all: it was enough for them that *there should be midnight silence;* nay, perhaps, they would tell them, in their fury, to go and starve—to go and be hanged: when they had quelled the riot, and dispersed the rabble, their duty was done. Far otherwise with the ministers of the gospel—true peace-officers; they came to the scenes of sin and strife, not only to quell confusion, but to point the rioters to a happy and eternal home—to tell them that they were children—that they had a Father in heaven—that children's bread was provided for them, and to allure them, by every argument, and every entreaty, to go home. This is an outline of what he said; but we despair of giving any idea of the half-inspired fury with which he wrought it up, and brought it out. And no sooner was it over, than he returned to his reasonings, and his audience to their repose.

Perhaps the misty glimmer which was cast around the greater part of Bruce's sermons, added to our impression of their greatness. But there were occasions when he soared to a sustained and luminous elevation—when, throughout an entire sermon, he kept up a train of clear and masterly thought, now mounting to rugged sublimity, and now melting to pathos—when the orb of his mind, clearing away the mists which at once obscured and dilated it, shone out in its proper dimensions—when he kindled at one time into wild poetry, at another threw a solemn shadow over every face, and again touched the sacred fountain, and awakened the blessed flow of tears.

Mr Bruce has published little. We are aware of nothing but a lecture on "Church Establishments," some "Sermons on the Sabbath," and a sermon preached on the death of Mr Martin, who, after Dr Thomson, for a short time occupied the pulpit of St George's. This last is infinitely worthy of its author. As an exposition of the theme, it may be, in the cant of common theologic critjcism, imperfect—that is, it does not profess to exhaust a subject which, possibly, in all its bearings, is not exhaustible by human intellect; nor is it a finically-finished piece of elegant inanity: but it abounds in beautiful thoughts, produced a prodigious effect when delivered, and may be for some time remembered, both as a specimen of his very peculiar style, and as a memorial of the "meek and most holy" man over whose ashes it was preached.

Thus may Bruce, amid the dearth of truly original preachers which this age, fertile in imitations and surface idiosyncrasies, exhibits, be called a native well, somewhat turbid, indeed, in its colour, rough and stern in its site, as *drumly* as it is deep, but living, springing fresh from the soil, communicating with the centre, and reflecting the stars; or, to vary the figure, if no spire of surpassing oratory, pointing to the sky, like Chalmers—no classic dome, shattered by the lightnings of heaven, like Hall—no grand Gothic

ruin, standing gloomy under the moon, like Irving—no castellated fastness of intellectual might, lording it over subject lands by the terror of its artillery, like Thomson—no parish kirk, strong in its simplicity, and venerable from its age, like Gordon;—to a lonely tower let us liken him, set sternly on its beaked promontory, overlooking a waste of waters, and "holding dark communion with the cloud."

On the principle of contrast and variety, we name next Dr George Croly. And were we seeking to characterise him in one word, we might call him the Burke of theology. If far less searching and comprehensive in thought, and less easy and varied in diction, he has much of his master's splendour of imagery, and more than his pomp and profusion of language. His great merit is intensity: he never lowers his flight, nor checks his pride; and yet, notwithstanding all the gigantic figures which his imagination loves, and the kindling pace at which his mind moves, his thought never loses its strength or clearness, nor is his language often, though sometimes, turgid. Intellect bears up the mass of weighty words and images. The huge trump of his style is filled with the blast of genius. This peculiar passion for the grand and lofty—this preference for the great side of every dilemma, the stronger of any two words, the vaster of any two images—distinguishes all his writings alike. It gives a stately, statuesque air to his smallest poem. "His little fishes talk like whales." It colours, with the hues of stormy sunshine, all the pages of that marvellous narrative which Salathiel tells, with lips which are never to kiss the ice-cold cup of death. It copes with the grandeurs of the French Revolution—an event which haunts his imagination, and heaves in his style. It makes him a congenial biographer of Burke, and conducts him, with eye unblenched and foot untrembling, through the muttering thunders, the bursting trumpets, the slow opening seals, the dark descending vials, the voices, tempests, tumultuating glories, mixing metaphors, shifting scenes, and palpable darkness, of the Apocalypse. Connected with this characteristic love of the lofty, is his principal defect as a writer. He wants repose; he has few resting-places; he loves the magnificent too exclusively; he sometimes fatigues us by too long flights, and sometimes dazzles and stupifies us with too much splendour. Not that we would visit *such* faults so severely as would some timid and cold critics, who have talked, in dolorous terms, of excess, and a "tableland being a plain," and the mischiefs springing from perpetual excellence. If in such a case there be an excess, it is an excess of glory; if a tableland be merely a plain, it is an elevated plain, nearer the mountains and the stars. If Croly's style be uniformly splendid, it is as uniformly his own; if his figures be numerous, they are new; if his imagination run riot, its gambols are gigantic; if you cannot read his three volumes, or one volume, at a sitting, try several; if you cannot at several, then, depend upon it, you yourself are to blame.

"Salathiel, or the Wandering Jew," had the disadvantage of a theme at once difficult and hackneyed. He that sought to breathe fresh interest on a topic so old had no easy task. For just think how often this strange figure had appeared in modern literature, from poems and novels, down to ballads and penny pamphlets. In spite of all this, Croly has put a bold hand to the plough. His book wants unity of purpose and continuance of interest: it is a series of glowing pictures, strung somewhat loosely together, often over-drawn and over-coloured, but full of life, and fire, and imagery, and passion; and, in parts and passages, laying an irresistible hold upon your attention, and hurrying you away, as the hero of the story was hurried, in that ghastly galley, the blaze of misery in his immortal eye outshining the flames which were glaring around him.

How like, yet how different, Salathiel from St Leon! Both are the sport of a terrible destiny, and have reason to curse the Nessus shirt of immortality which wraps them round. But, while Salathiel frequently forgets, and causes you to forget, that he is the Wandering Jew at all,

St Leon never loses sight, nor you for a moment, of the blasting gift of the stranger. It is this fragmentary and disjointed character of Salathiel which has prevented its popularity, and to some extent neutralised the brilliance of its description, and the passionate pomp of its style, the fine oriental cast of its scenery, and the bustling rapidity of its narrative. It is, on the other hand, the pertinacity of purpose, the unity of object, the strong gravitation of every thought, and incident, and image, and word, round one central design, which, in this, as in Godwin's other works, explains their magical power, makes up for comparative meagreness of style and monotony of fancy, and weaves the chains of soft, yet strong interest which bind you to his pages. Still is "Salathiel" a noble production. We may call it, in allusion to the subject, a stately evergreen, a high holly-tree, looking over the withered hedges and ungrowing grasses of the winter landscape.*

His "Commentary on the Revelation" is his principal contribution to the literature of his own profession, and makes a bold attempt to grapple with the difficulties of this singular book, and to evolve certain steady pillars of truth from its broken abysses of light and shadow. And whatever we may think of some of his views, his Commentary is succinct, clear, and decided. As a history of the events symbolised, it is admirably compressed. As an explanation, it fails from a love of simplicity. One event, the French Revolution, being uppermost in his mind, he concludes it uppermost in the mind of the apostle, too; and hence has sprung some harsh twisting of figures, and some puerile trifling with words. Surely the supposed coincidence between the words Apollyon and Napoleon is not in good taste. As a literary work, it is one of the few books of the kind worth reading for its composition. No part of Scripture had been so unfortunate in the temperament of its expositors as the Revelation. In general, the contrast between the superhuman splendours of the text and the creeping character of the comment was glaring. But Croly is on fire throughout—carries a thread of burning gold through his coldest calculations, and finds congenial employment in painting, as with the pencil of Martin, the gigantic glooms and glories of the theme. Irving may be named; but his four volumes on the Revelation are the poorest of all his productions, imperfect in form and substance, while the gleams of eloquence which occur are few and far between, spotting a deep and melancholy darkness. His wing is worn, and his eye dim; whereas Croly is fresh and strong as a mountain eagle "newly bathed," and is seen against the beams of prophetic day, like an "angel standing in the sun."

Altogether, though there be more pleasing, polished, and popular preachers in London than Dr Croly, we question if there be one who, taking him all in all, as poet, biographer, commentator, novelist, miscellaneous writer, public speaker, preacher, and talker, can be named in the same sentence.

The late Dr M'All, of Manchester, was one of those men whose eloquence would not bear transference from the pulpit or platform to the written page. Authentic accounts exist of extraordinary effects produced by his oratory. A speaking countenance, a voice at once of sweetness and commanding compass, rapid flow of sound, and great affluence of language, were the elements of the boundless popularity and influence which he gained among his party. He had also the possession of that highest kind of encomium, *laudari a laudato viro*. Robert Hall admired him to enthusiasm, and said once of the Liverpool people, "What a parcel of pigs they must be not to like M'All." But, in an evil hour, the friends of this distinguished man printed his sermons; sermons, too, which had, when delivered, produced an overwhelming impression, and had been written out by their author with the greatest care. And musical is the linked sweetness of their long and sounding sentences, and amazing their command of elegant and sparkling

* We have reason to know that Salathiel is very popular among the refined and intellectual classes in America.

diction; but there their merit comes to a full stop. Their sentiment is commonplace, seeking self-oblivion amid a cloud of words; a faint rich mist of philosophical verbiage steeps the whole composition; there is continual flow and fluency, but rarely eloquence; his sentences perpetually "threaten to move and astonish, but never do;" few "live coals" of burning truth lie upon the even and monotonous surface; the language is often tawdry, and the magnificent sound, like the swell of the organ, gives you a vague emotion of delight, but utters no articulate and memorable meaning. He has been compared to Dr Thomas Brown, and has certainly his involution, but not his subtlety—his diffusion, but not his depth—his sparkle, but not his splendour—intellect and imagination interpenetrating each other, as in the writings of Brown, but intellect less refined in energy, and imagination more limited in range. It is the gilded sheath without the sword. An orator, however, of a high order M'All must have been. We will not soon forget the delightful story told of him by Wardlaw. At a missionary meeting where he was present, some one told of a Negro boy, who, when informed by his teacher that God had sent his Son to die for the world, replied, "Oh, massa, me no wonder at that—it be just like him." M'All kindled at the story, rose up, and uttered a noble extempore harangue on the text the boy had given him; dilating on Nature, Providence, and Redemption, and closing the other and the other paragraph with the words, "It be just like him." We love M'All, too, as one who struggled up his way to distinction, against prejudice and proscription, which were disgraceful only to the parties by whom they were employed. It was a fine saying of him, as, under the deep darkness of youthful doubt, he paced the beach at Dysart, and said to his friend, "Oh, this heart of mine is black enough to pollute all that ocean!"

As a thinker and writer, we deem Hamilton of Leeds superior to M'All. His appearance was somewhat against him. He was a huge tun of a person, "a round, fat, oily man of God," with gross unspiritual face, and monotonous, though fluent delivery. But there was a rich and racy originality about him—a bold independence of thinking, and an irregular gorgeousness of style. He was the Hazlitt of the pulpit. He affected an abrupt and jagged mode of utterance. His sentences reminded you of the curt and clipped tail of a racer. He dealt in quaint antithesis, and elaborate accumulations of natural imagery. He had the genuine blood of a poet in his veins; but, in forcing itself through his curious materialism, no wonder though it had assumed forms somewhat odd and fantastic. Perhaps never, since Thomson of the "Seasons," did the Parnassian spark—*divinæ particula auræ*—so completely cushion itself in soft and flabby flesh. He was withal a very amiable, good-humoured, companionable, and pious person, and preached to a large and flourishing congregation in Leeds. He had a strong literary turn, and besides his "Sermons," "Essay on Missions," &c. printed a book, entitled "Nugæ Literariæ:" an odd, clever, characteristic, and very learned medley of prose and verse, for which the University of Glasgow dignified him with an honorary degree.

Dr Harris, of Cheshunt College, the author of "Mammon," &c., claims a notice in those rapid sketches. His great power is the exhaustion and ingenious illustration of topics. His manner of writing has a quiet earnestness about it, which is very impressive, and which characterises his mode of public address. He deserves great praise for the lively graces of "Mammon," for the manful and masterful execution of the "Great Teacher:" a book which contains the most successful full-length portraiture of the Divine Man we have ever read, and, since the first edition of this work appeared, for two very ingenious and original books, on the "Preadamitic Earth," and "Man Primeval."

Passing by those very powerful and popular preachers, Parsons of York, Thomas Binney, Thomas Dale, &c., we return to Scotland, and meet the great author of

the Lives of Knox and Melville. M'Crie's original powers were clearness and strength of understanding. Robust force characterised every movement of his mind, and every sinew of his style. He had even that rare gift, that gift which defies analysis, and ranks almost with the inscrutable laws of nature—power; and this not the power of passion, nor of fancy, nor of convulsive excitement, but the calm, still, yet warm and living energy of great intellect, compelling, from the echo of every mind, a full and faithful response. Like Andrew Thomson's, his mind disdained subtlety, refinement, the foliage of fancy, and the arts of display. He knew right well that he had been sent into the world for other purposes than that of rounding periods, "polishing away at the corners of ideas," and practising on his readers the little tricks of literary surprise. His object was, not to raise the eyebrows, but to reach the soul; and to do this, he knew no other method or magic, but that of causing his strong thinking to shape itself at once into clear words. His mind was one of energetic common sense, enlightened by great reading; his imagination, vivid and literal; his eloquence, the spontaneous fervour of an earnest mind; and his style, the "express image" of his intellect. In his perspicacious eye, too, there lurked a ray of scorching sarcasm, which needed only to be lighted up. Eminently pious, he had yet a thorough contempt for all whining, facemaking, cant, and pretended unction; all these the essential manliness of his nature rebuked and withered from his presence: add to this, the perseverance, as of a bloodhound, in research; a masterly clear-sightedness in dealing with historical evidence; habits of mental independence, too much modified by a reverence for the wisdom of the past; an honesty not the less interesting that it was tinged by a strong shade of prejudice—and you have some of the qualifications which constituted him a powerful partisan historian. A philosophical historian, in the sense of Hume, he is not—he has neither his sublime of indifference, nor depth of ingenuity; for this he is too brawny in his intellectual motions, and too sincere in his religious spirit. As a historical painter, he has none of the brief and terrible hieroglyphics of Tacitus, like the handwriting on the wall, predicting the fall of the Roman power, nor of the large and glowing canvas of Livy and Robertson. He is not, like Gibbon or Carlyle, a poet in the guise of an historian, singing in barbaric but gorgeous strains, the one the downfal of the Roman throne, like an avalanche, burying the middle ages in night; the other the tumbling of the crown of Charlemagne into a sea of blood. Nor is he a dry detailer like Wodrow; nor a special pleader like Gilbert Stewart; nor a romance-writer like Voltaire; nor, like Malcolm Laing and Hallam, does he merge the historian in the ingenious dissertator: to considerable pictorial power, he unites much clear-minded sagacity. With the sterner siftings of the historian, he blends the ease, interest, and repose of the biographer. His narrative is clear, distinct, and flowing. He loves to draw those who most nearly resemble his own ideal—perhaps his own character—men of rugged outline and stern unmitigated virtues. Thus he seems made to be the biographer of Knox. His mind was as a vessel for containing the ideal of Knox's character—a glove for measuring that rugged and knotty hand. Like all historians, he is compelled sometimes to diverge from the current of his story into digressions and reasonings; but is seldom seduced into long and laboured digressions: he soon springs back into the main and middle stream. The Alps and aerial heights of history, where it touches on the dark skirts of tragedy, and plucks lone and lofty flowers of poetry, and grasps at the lightnings of eloquence, he never reaches. In this highest walk of the historic muse, giddy from its elevation, and dangerously nearing on ideal provinces, we can trace Tacitus, and Gibbon, and Livy, and Carlyle, but hardly M'Crie. Still he unites, more than any of these writers, the various qualities which combine to form a complete historian. Would he had grasped some such subject as the Decline of the

Christian Church, or the Reformation, or the story of the Papacy. It had suited his taste, been a sufficient stimulus to his ambition, and filled up the measure of his powers. His great fault, as an historian, apart from the lack of such minor qualities as grace, elasticity, and elegance, is the air of partisanship which colours all his writings. The member and head of a small sect, flung back, by disgust, at what he deemed modern degeneracy, upon earlier and sterner times—surrounded, habitually, by the piled-up folios and the grim faces of the past—haunted by memories of the Reformation and the Covenant, and having few sympathies with the age in which he lived, its advancing tendencies, and united religious movements, he too often to "party gives up what was meant for mankind." In mere hatred to Popery, he becomes an idolater of the Reformers. Though he sets up no claim of infallibility for John Knox, he is loth to admit the smallest speck upon his character, and fights desperately for the most objectionable parts of his conduct and tactique. This spice of party feeling, however, has secured earnestness, given his works an aspect of stern sincerity, and entitled their author to the character of a good, honest, hearty "hater." Indeed prejudice, in M'Crie, as in Walter Scott, was, perhaps, the spring of his mental activity, and the tower of his mental strength.

Besides Knox and Melville, and his other historical works, which are too well known to require criticism, he has left some posthumous productions of various merit. His lectures on the Book of Esther are a lucid and energetic exposition of that fine romantic fragment of Jewish history. They are a specimen, too, and legacy of his mode of lecturing—a mode of public instruction in which he greatly excelled. He had a thorough idea of the true nature of a lecture, as distinct from the discursiveness of a sermon, from the dryness of an exegesis, from the exhaustive necessities of a treatise, from the declamatory looseness of a harangue—as combining many various elements, learning, logic, annotation, doctrinal and practical matter, into one interesting, instructive, and comprehensive whole. But superior to his lectures we deem his volume of sermons, which discover to us new qualities by which his former works were not peculiarly distinguished. They unite all his wonted energy with novelty of thought, strength of imagination, and richness and even fervour and passion of language. The "Thief on the Cross" has been called, by a competent judge, the finest sermon in the English language. Altogether, the book furnishes a model of preaching, the antithesis of what, we fear, is most popular in the South, and of which Henry Melvill is the type: the latter all sparkle, and the former all solidity and savour; the one all strut, the other all simplicity; the one all toil and tumour, the other all easy and masculine strength; the one sometimes protruding the preacher before the Saviour, the other exhibiting him ever veiled in the presence of the great subject of the preaching; the one, after all its efforts and laboured brilliances, barely successful in winning your applause, the other commanding it by the plain majestic movement of the preacher's mind; the sermons produced in conformity with the one, rich in language, but thin and barren in thought, while those dictated by the severer taste of the other are full of felicitous and sound reflection, the more impressive from the robust garb it wears;—the two measuring the whole length between the principal varieties of style and taste which prevail in the present day. Dr M'Crie, notwithstanding the weight of his character and matter, was never a popular preacher; or, rather, this very solidity, along with a dull manner, and a miserable sing-song in his voice, which, in direct and curious contrast to his intellectual calibre, was one of the most unmanly and puling which (even in an age of puling preachers who seem to think that religion as well as life lies in one's "nostrils") we ever heard, counteracted the impression of his earnestness, the majesty of his appearance, and the peculiar penetration of his eye. He was occupied on a Life of Calvin when he died. We regret that only the first sketch remains,

having a profound reverence for the Genevese reformer, who, though Lake Leman seldom reflected his smile, and the mountains of Savoy never struck his soul with their snowy grandeur; though his imagination was barren as the summit of the Jura, and his soul gloomy as the dungeon of Chillon, was, nevertheless, a great, good, grim, and honest man. We recommend those who would know more of M'Crie to his "Life," by his son. He was unquestionably the *Ultimus Romanorum*—the last genuine specimen of the Old Puritan.

Had space permitted, we would have had much pleasure in dilating on some of the leading spirits of the Dissenting body in Scotland:—On Dr John Brown of Edinburgh, who, to a masculine eloquence and great popularity as a preacher, adds a knowledge of Scripture criticism equalled by few, and who, next perhaps to Dr Robinson, Moses Stuart, and Pye Smith, is the most accomplished Scripture critic out of Germany; on Ritchie, with his ready elocution, his homely energetic eloquence, his matchless, though sometimes fatal facility, and rich exuberant, original humour; on Marshall of Kirkintilloch, a "scholar ripe and good," an acute though not profound thinker, gifted with a clear, sharp, vigorous style, and a vein of sarcasm distinguished by cutting depth and quiet ferocity, but whose views are not so wide as his information, and whose arrogance is rather greater than his powers; on the late amiable and active-minded Dr Heugh of Glasgow, who carried tact and talent almost to the verge of genius; on Young of Perth, the most penetrating observer, the most sensible and acute thinker, and one of the most eloquent writers in his church, whose essays prefixed to editions of Christian authors, published by Collins, and written in a style compounded of Chalmers and Foster, have extended his reputation far beyond the bounds of his own body; on Anderson and Taylor of Glasgow, among the Relief, the one a most vigorous, honest, and original man—in the words of Burns, "a strong in-kneed sort of a soul"—the other a man of general accomplishments; on Russell of Dundee, who was a person of profound penetration, and fluent and often powerful speech; on Alexander of Edinburgh, and Doctors King and Eadie of Glasgow, three distinguished scholars as well as divines; on the late Ballantyne of Stonehaven, who, in his "Inquiry into the Human Mind," has left a monument of his singular analytic powers; on Jamieson of the Dictionary, one of the most learned men in Europe; on Dr Dick, that clear-headed theologian; on Dr Ferrier of Paisley, who never did anything worthy of the high talent with which all who knew, knew him to be endowed; on Jameson of Methven, a man of fine and original genius, "blasted with poetic fire;" and many others. But we must pause at Dr Wardlaw, who, if not in native powers, certainly in acquired reputation, is the *facile princeps* of Scottish Dissent. Mild elegance, added to acuteness and luminousness of understanding, are the leading properties of Wardlaw's mind. Genius, if we mean by it the power which climbs the seventh heaven of invention, which darts its eye, like a torch of fire, into dark deep holds, which sees more in short and sudden glances of rapid and burning thought than others can in years of close and laborious investigation, which sees in the rose a richer red, and in the sky a deeper azure, and in the sun a more divine and dazzling ray, and in the sea a finer foam, and in the stars a more spiritual gold, than ever nature's own "sweet and cunning hand put on," and finds beauty and meaning rushing out from common objects upon its peculiar and purged eye, which to all others are invisible; this magic of the soul, this medium, finer, truer, and clearer than air, is not, we think, possessed by the subject of the present sketch. But, understanding by genius the power which colours diction, which, without dyeing the whole mass, tinges the edges of meditation, which illustrates without inventing, touches with its finger, not seizes in his hand, the thunderbolts of imagination, binds the flowers of fancy, in modest and elegant garlands, round the marble statues of thought; this

kind of genius Wardlaw possesses in a very considerable degree. He is never the slave, but always the master of his fancy. His imagination is *his*, he is never *its*. His figures come and go when he bids them; they pass over the stage and disappear; he is never tempted by their enchanting beauty to detain and clasp them to his bosom, nor does he ever summon up shapes at which his own imagination shudders. His images have, however, much delicate and trembling loveliness, and are always felicitously attired in the draperies of style. Often they are like dew-drops from the womb of the morning, as soft as they are sparkling. As an intellectual man, he has no subtlety, nor much depth, but is logical and luminous. He excels in defining the subject in dispute, in clearing it of all extraneous matter, in laying down with precision his premises, and in compressing the sum and substance of the case into manageable compass. He is one of the best of religious controversialists. Less dogmatic, scornful, and overbearing, if also less learned, less powerful and profound, than Horsley or Magee, he is incomparably more lively and spirited than Jameson; and, while inferior to Pye Smith in research and erudition, he is a more agile and dexterous reasoner, and shows none of that almost criminal tenderness to his opponents with which the author of the "Scripture Testimony to the Messiah" has been, justly or unjustly, charged. While Horsley smites down his opponents with a battle-axe; while Jameson assails them with a rude and heavy claymore; while Moses Stuart gives them the *coup-de-grace* with a short and sharp dagger of mercy; while Pye Smith flourishes rather than applies a baton over their heads—Wardlaw pierces them under the fifth rib with a light and glancing rapier. He has, above most men, the art of making a dry controversy interesting. And this he does not, like Warburton, by the variety of irrelevant but entertaining matter which he brings up *en passant;* nor like Horsley, by the stimulating effect of vehement and furious abuse; nor like Pascal, by the layer of brilliant sarcasm interwoven into the argument; nor like Junius, by the cool venom and snaky fascination of his satire; nor like Burke, by the magnificent divergencies of his incontrollable mind from the paths of his argument into eloquence, philosophy, history, and poetry, *extra flammantia mœnia mundi;* nor like Andrew Thomson, by bursts of broad humour; but by a combination of qualities—by the ludicity of the style, the art of the arrangement, the ease of the transitions, the liveliness of the logic, the mild contempt he now and then discovers for his opponents, and the keen sarcasm and eloquence into which he often mounts, as if on a light ladder, from the solid ground of his argumentation. We notice in him, too, a quality which Dugald Stewart ascribes to Barrow, the masterly and conscious ease with which he accomplishes whatever he intends; a quality springing less in him, however, from a rapid and intuitive habit of thought, than from the length of time he has revolved the particular subject, and the perfect command he has acquired over it. He does not so much improvise, as recite *memoriter* what he has thoroughly mastered. It is a proof of no common power, that he has handled so many different subjects; dared to the outrance such opponents as Brougham, Bentham, and Chalmers; and that the announcement of a new work of controversy from his pen still excites a sensation in the religious world. And yet, withal, no one deems him a Chillingworth or Horsley, or expects that, whatever angular originalities his mind may strike out in its way, he will cast any general, new, or startling light upon any topic whatever; or contends that his acquirements equal his accomplishments; or ranks him with the sturdier and stronger order of polemical minds. But there is such a confidence in his intellectual and moral integrity, in his arrangement, and his art, and his skill, and his liveliness, and his comprehensiveness, and his grace, and his good temper, and his elegance, and his clearness, and his facility, that all are delighted to see a disputed or a delicate topic under his hand.

His miscellaneus sermons are not quite equal to his controversial works,

His mind requires a wider surface for its development than the limits of a sermon supply. In writing sermons, too, he wants the salutary stimulus of opposition, without which a placid mind like his is apt to sink into tameness. Those on the deaths of Dr Balfour and Mrs Grenville Ewing are the best. On the the whole, though in the first rank of Christian controversialists, he must take the second among sermon writers.

As a speaker, Wardlaw's tones are soft, tender, and trembling. The key he assumes may be called a long audible whisper. There is a silvery sweetness in his notes, like that of gently flowing streams. He reads, and reads so easily and elegantly, with such earnest quiet of manner, and with such minute and fairy music of intonation, that you wish him to read on for ever. Yet there is nothing mawkish in his tones. You may, indeed, on reflection, wish that there had been a greater variety; that, instead of the eternal dropping of honey from the rock, there had been a mixture of manlier melodies —the crash of the thunder, the shivering burst of the cataract, the full-lipped harmony of the great deep river, the jagged music of the mountain stream, or the boom of the breakers in the "half-glutted hollows of reef-rocks;" but you do not feel this at the time. While the preacher's voice continues to sound, you listen as to the song of the Syrens; it winds round you like an enchanted thread; you suck it in like "honey-dew, or the milk of paradise." This mildness of tone comports with his character (a man of timid and gentle temper, foaming and thundering in the pulpit, may well remind us, as well as the French, of a *mouton enragé*), it points his sarcastic vein (how do a mild lip and tone acerbate a keen sneer!), and it is in keeping with his personal appearance. Gravity without sternness is the leading expression of his countenance, which also beams with a certain thoughtful sharpness, like the face of one who has often leaned over and looked up from an adversary's book. A tinge of sadness, susceptible, we believe, of sad explanation, lies, like the "soft shadow of an angel's wing," upon his face and eye. A semicircle of grey hair surmounts the whole. Dr Wardlaw has been a voluminous and varied writer. What subject has he not touched, and what not adorned, by the mild moonlight of his intellect? In his youth he wrote verse, and we have seen, in his own handwriting, a satirical poem in Hudibrastic measure against one Porteous, who, about the close of the last century, assailed Dissenters with extreme acrimony of abuse. It struck us, from a hurried glance, as clever but coarse, not quite worthy of the author of the "Discourses on the Unitarian Controversy." It was never printed. Since then, he has busied himself with more solid matters; has written on Assurance, Infant Baptism, Christian Ethics, &c.; has published divers volumes of discourses, and many single sermons; has flung a smooth stone or two from the brook at the Goliath-forehead of Brougham, who had sported certain Pelagian heresies on the subject of man's responsibility for his belief; has had a regular stand-up fight with Chalmers, on the Voluntary Question; has written an interesting and masterly Memoir of Dr M'All; and has just issued a Treatise on Congregationalism, meant for a facer to poor Presbyterians and their system for ever! Altogether, he is the most *accomplished* divine of the day, though to the day, in all probability, his reputation will be confined. We need scarcely remind our readers that he is now gathered to his fathers.

We come, in fine, to the greatest of them all, Edward Irving. And, first, let us glance at the person of the man. In reference to other literary men, you think, or at least speak, of their appearance last. But so it was of this remarkable man, that most people put his face and figure in the foreground, and spoke of his mental and moral faculties as belonging to them, rather than of them as belonging to the man. In this respect, he bore a strong resemblance to the two heroes of the French Revolution, Mirabeau and Danton. Irving was a Danton spiritualised. Had he been born in France, and subjected to its desecrating influences, and

hurled head foremost into the vortex of its revolution, he would, in all probability, have cut some such tremendous figure as the Mirabeau of the Sans-culottes; he would have laid about him as wildly at the massacres of September, and carried his huge black head as high in the death-cart, and under the guillotine. Had he been born in England, in certain circles, he had perhaps emerged from obscurity in the shape of an actor, the most powerful that ever trod the stage, combining the statuesque figure and sonorous voice of the Kemble family, with the energy, the starts, and bursts, and inspired fury of Kean, added to some qualities peculiarly his own. Had he turned his thoughts to the tuneful art, he had written rugged and fervent verse, containing much of Milton's grandeur, and much of Wordsworth's oracular simplicity. Had he snatched the pencil, he would have wielded it with the savage force of Salvator Rosa, and his conceptions would have partaken now of Blake's fantastic quaintness, and now of Martin's gigantic monotony. Had he lived in the age of chivalry, he would have stood side by side in glorious and well-foughten field with Cœur-de-Lion himself, and died in the steel harness full gallantly. Had he lived in an age of persecution, he had been either a hardy martyr, leaping into the flames as into his wedding suit, or else a fierce inquisitor, aggravating by his portentous frown, and more portentous squint, the agonies of his victim. Had he been born in Calabria, he had been as picturesque a bandit as ever stood on the point of a rock between a belated painter and the red evening sky, at once an object of irresistible terror and irresistible admiration, leaving the poor artist in doubt whether to take to his pencil or to his heels. But, in whatever part or age of the world he had lived, he must have been an extraordinary man, one of those rare specimens of humanity who balance all their lives between the pinnacle of genius and the abyss of frenzy, and whom the strong handwriting of nature itself, upon face, and figure, and bearing (and passing spirit-like glares and glances beyond the habitual expression of their countenance), marks out as the foremost of their species, links fearfully and wonderfully connecting man with some superior order of intelligences.

Nature had certainly given the world "assurance of a man" in the form, stature, broad brow, swarthy complexion, dark locks, and wild sinister glare, of Edward Irving. But that those peculiarities alone accounted for his unexampled popularity, we by no means believe, except so far as they were the exponent's of his uncommon mental qualities. Had there been, as has been asserted, any marked disproportion between the splendid *personnel* and the intellect of the man; had his bodily qualities been only the decorations of a mediocrity of mind, instead of exciting admiration, they would have produced disgust. An insignificant person, over-informed with soul, is felt to be an incongruity; but much more anomalous were an ideal form and physiognomy animated by an ordinary, or less than an ordinary, degree of intellectual power. No mere size, however stupendous, or expression of face, however singular, could have uplifted a common man to the giddy height on which Irving stood for awhile, calm and collected as the statue upon its pedestal. It was the correspondence, the reflection of his powers and passions upon his person; independence stalking in his stride, intellect enthroned on his brow, imagination dreaming on his lips, physical energy stringing his frame, and athwart the whole a cross ray, as from Bedlam, shooting in his eye! It was this which excited such curiosity, wonder, awe, rapture, and tears, and made his very enemies, even while abusing, confess his power, and tremble in his presence. It was this which made ladies flock and faint, which divided attention with the theatres, eclipsed the oratory of Parliament, made Canning's fine countenance flush with pleasure, "as if his veins ran lightning," accelerated in an alarming manner the twitch in Brougham's dusky visage, and elicited from his eye those singular glances, half of envy and half of admiration, which are the truest tokens of applause, and made such men as Hazlitt protest, on re-

turning half squeezed to death from one of his displays, that a monologue from Coleridge, a recitation of one of his own poems from Wordsworth, a burst of puns from Lamb, and a burst of passion from Kean, were not to be compared to a sermon from Edward Irving.

His manner also contributed to the charm. His aspect, wild yet grave, as of one labouring with some mighty burden; his voice, deep, clear, and with crashes of power alternating with cadences of softest melody; his action, now graceful as the wave of the rose-bush in the breeze, and now fierce and urgent as the motion of the oak in the hurricane; the countenance kindling, dilating, contracting, brightening, or darkening with the theme —now attractive in its fine symmetrical repose, and now terrible to look at, in its strong lines, and glaring excitement, and an air of earnestness and enthusiasm which ever prevented the impression that it was a mere display;—all this formed an unparalleled combination of the elements of Christian oratory. Then there was the style, curiously uniting the beauties and faults of a sermon of the seventeenth century, with the beauties and faults of a parliamentary harangue or magazine article of the nineteenth—quaint as Browne, florid as Taylor, with the bleak wastes which intersect the scattered green spots of Howe, mixed here with sentences involved, clumsy, and cacophonous as the worst of Jeremy Bentham's, and interspersed there with threads from the magic loom of Coleridge. It was a strange amorphous Babylonish dialect, imitative, yet original, rank with a prodigous growth of intertangled beauties and blemishes, enclosing amid wide tracks of jungle little bits of clearest and purest loveliness, and throwing out sudden volcanic bursts of real fire, amid jets of mere smoke and hot water. It had great passages, but not one finished sermon or sentence. It was a thing of shreds, and yet a web of witchery. It was perpetually stumbling the least fastidious hearer or reader, and yet drawing both impetuously on. And then, to make the medley "thick and slab," there was the matter, a grotesque compound, including here a panegyric on Burns, and there a fling at Byron; here a plan of future punishment, laid out with as much minuteness as if he had been projecting a bridewell, and there a ferocious attack upon the "Edinburgh Review;" here a glimpse of the gates of the Celestial City, as if taken from the top of Mount Clear, and there a description of the scenery and of the poetry of the Lakes; here a pensive retrospect to the days of the Covenant, and there a fling at Jeremy Bentham; here a ray of prophecy, and there a bit of politics; here a quotation from the Psalms, and there from the "Rime of the Ancient Marinere." Such was the strange, yet overwhelming exhibition which our hero made before the gaping, staring, wondering, laughing, listening, weeping, and thrilling multitudes of fashionable, political, and literary London.

What has been the exact amount of benefit done, of impression made, and of real residuum left by his grand pulpit bravuras, and the momentary madness of admiration which followed them, we cannot as yet fully or accurately estimate; but we are fain to believe that his oratory did leave not a few stings behind it; and that, in "shaming the wisdom of the Sadducee," withering the sneer of the profane witling, bringing blushes to the blanched cheeks of jewelled courtesans, impressing statesmen with some sense of the dignity and grandeur of Christianity, telling home truths in thunder tones to the wise, and the learned, and the witty, and the fashionable, and the fair—standing up, in short, a living Sinai in the midst of a second Sodom, he has been the means of much good, which may one day come out in noble prominence, when his foibles are all forgotten, his faults all forgiven, and his detractors and foes are "dark as night." In judging of the mind of Irving, it is extremely difficult to do so by an act of abstraction, and apart from his personal appearance, his popularity, the singularities of his career, and his early and melancholy end. It was not one of those massive, intellectual minds, which constitute a great metaphysician, or a mathematical genius; and yet he was,

we have heard, fond of geometrical study, and had dabbled not a little in metaphysics. Nor was it, on the other hand, of such a cast as to plunge him, by a mere necessity of his intellect, into the abyss of poetry, although poetry boiled in his blood, and imagination swam in his eye. Nor was it a mind of much dialectic energy, though he reasoned much, and could occasionally reason well, and, while he sojourned in Glasgow, was noted for the close and hard-headed ratiocination of his discourses. Nor did his mind exhibit a beautiful balance of powers. Nor was it a purely unique and original intellect. It was a mind of great general powers and passions, determined in a particular direction by circumstances. It had a strong but irregular understanding, a powerful rather than a copious imagination, great decision and daring, various rather than profound or minute learning, sympathies wide and keen, taste always extremely imperfect, and sometimes wretchedly bad, a thirst for excitement raging in his blood, and a contagious enthusiasm forming the stormy atmosphere in which all his faculties lived, moved, and had their being. We must not omit, in merest justice, his extraordinary gift of prayer. Some few of his contemporaries might equal him in preaching, but none approached to the very hem of his garment while rapt up into the heaven of devotion. It struck you as the prayer of a great being conversing with God. Your thoughts were transported to Sinai, and you heard Moses speaking with the Majesty on high, under the canopy of darkness, amid the quaking of the solid mountain and the glimmerings of celestial fire; or you thought of Elijah praying in the cave in the intervals of the earthquake, and the fire, and the still small voice. The solemnity of the tones convinced you that he was conscious of an unearthly presence, and speaking to it, not to you. The diction and imagery showed that his faculties were wrought up to their highest pitch, and tasked to their noblest endeavour, in that "celestial colloquy sublime." And yet the elaborate intricacies and swelling pomp of his preaching were exchanged for deep simplicity. A profusion of Scripture was used; and never did inspired language better become lips than those of Irving. His public prayers told to those who could interpret their language of many a secret conference with Heaven—they pointed to wrestlings all unseen, and groanings all unheard—they drew aside, involuntarily, the veil of his secret retirements, and let in a light into the sanctuary of the closet itself. Prayers more elegant, and beautiful, and melting, have often been heard; prayers more urgent in their fervid importunity have been uttered once and again (such as those which were sometimes heard with deep awe to proceed from the chamber where the perturbed spirit of Hall was conversing aloud with its Maker till the dawning of the day); but prayers more organ-like and Miltonic, never. The fastidious Canning, when told by Sir James Mackintosh, of Irving praying for a family of orphans as "cast upon the fatherhood of God," was compelled to start, and own the beauty of the expression.

Irving's works furnish no full criterion whereby to try his powers. They were written first of all amid innumerable avocations, and in the heated and intoxicating atmosphere of popularity, where a man can no more do justice to himself in composition, than were he writing amid the bustle and blaze of a ball-room. They are full, indeed, of beautiful things; the prefaces to "Horne on the Psalms," and to "Ben Ezra," are worthy of any pen that ever wrote the English language; and, even in his later works, there is a mournful and passionate poetry of earnestness which compensates their mystic bewilderment. But, when we compare them with the man from whom they proceeded, we are forced to exclaim, "What a falling off is here!" Was that intellect conferred, that brow expanded, and the cross lightning of that wild eye kindled, only for the sake of those books, bulky as many of them are, with their wide wastes of verbinge, repetition, mere sound and fury, here cloudy commonplace, and there the very delination of genius? Are the shining points, ever and anon occurring, or

even the fiery columns of splendour, sometimes standing up suddenly, sufficient to relieve the surrounding wilderness? No; and so far is this from being derogatory to him, that it rather raises our estimate of the man. It is ever, as we have hinted in our paper on Hall, a compliment, when you turn from the works to the author, and say, "This is not worthy of you; you could have done better." And it is no great soul which you can confine within the boards of any book, however big; even Shakspere stood above his works, and so, assuredly, did Irving. Written for the pulpit, yet necessarily deprived, in publication, of all those charms of voice and manner which secured their triumph there—dwarfed, besides, by the shadow of his own fame—how could his productions succeed? All of them, accordingly, after one or two convulsive flutters and splashes, sunk to the bottom. In an hour fatal for his reputation, he published the "Orations." The getting up of this book, the strangeness, if not affectation, of the title, the uncouthness of its diction, the sheer absurdity of some of its passages, gave it, notwithstanding the marks of power in every page, the air of a clever caricature, rather than a *bonâ fide* effusion of his mind. Then came, winging a yet wilder flight, "Babylon and Infidelity foredoomed of God," which showed that he was beginning to tamper with strong excitements, and to bewilder himself among the mountains of vision. About this time, he came down to his native land, which went forth as one man to meet, if not to welcome him—thousands and tens of thousands flocking to hear him in his own beloved Annandale, and Edinburgh rising at five in the morning to hear his expositions, then just mounting to predictions. Thence returning, he continued to pass from one new notion to another—to print his opinions while still crude in his mind—to surround himself with indiscriminate admirers, and to hear, as though he heard them not, the remonstrances of his friends. Meanwhile, his general popularity had waned. "London forgot this man, who, alas! could not in his turn forget." Ah! how changed from him who, from his pulpit, as from a throne, had launched his lightnings at feathered turbans and legislative brows! At length, separated from the church of his fathers, self-excluded, in a great measure, from the literary society he had so deeply relished, from their *noctes cœnæque Deum*, worn out in body, exhausted in mind, sick, sick at heart, his fame set, his prospects clouded, his name a jest, clinging to his theories to the last, but to the last sincere as an angel, and simple as a child, what was left this good, great, misguided man, but to die? "God unloosed his weary star." God shut the frenzied eye of this eagle in mercy and for ever. He died; and every one, while deploring the fate of the man, felt that it was well; he died, and all who were convinced that the fine gold had become dim, were glad that the Maker had taken it to himself, as we trust, to exalt it to shine for ever in the New Jerusalem.

Of his private history and personal manners, we cannot speak particularly. He was born in Annan. He taught some time in Kirkcaldy, where he distinguished himself as a severe disciplinarian. He assisted Dr Chalmers in Glasgow, and was by him recommended to London. All that followed is well known. His manner in company was exceedingly commanding; his temper warm and irritable; his affections strong; his talk rich and powerful.

We leave the subject with a mixture of feelings, but among them pitying love holds the principal place. We grant that his faults of taste were many, that some of his errors of opinion were glaring, that his career was brief and disastrous; but, throughout the whole, his heart continued to live: genius illumined his downfal, like lightning showing the leap of the cataract, which then "lay low, but mighty still." His purity of motive remained unimpeached, his sincerity unquestioned; and his piety deepened as his popularity declined.

"No further seek his merits to disclose,
Nor draw his frailties from their dread abode;
There they alike in trembling hope repose—
The bosom of his Father and his God."

SECOND SITTING.

We have often asked, and have often, too, of late, the question asked us, Why have we no life of Edward Irving? Why no full or authentic record of that short, eccentric, but most brilliant and instructive career? What has become of his papers, which, we believe, were numerous—of his sermons, private letters, and journal? (if such a thing as a journal he ever kept—think of the journal of a comet!) Why have none of his surviving friends been invited to overlook these, and construct from them a lifelike image of the man? Or, failing them, why has not some literary man of eminence—even although not imbued with all Irving's peculiar opinions, yet if possessing a general and genial sympathy with him—been employed on the task? We know that many think this arises from the impression that Irving died under a cloud, being felt by his admirers to be general. But does not the silence of his relatives and friends serve to deepen this impression? We have heard it hinted, on the other hand, that the real reason is connected with the peculiar views of Irving, some imagining that no man can write his life well, if not what is called an Irvingite, and that no Irvingite has the literary qualifications. These statements, however, we do not believe. Some of the Irvingites are men of very considerable talent, and why—although most of his very eminent literary friends be either dead or have departed farther and farther from his point of view; although Chalmers be gone, De Quincey otherwise occupied, Thomas Carlyle become a proclaimed Pantheist, and Thomas Erskine, of Linlathen, ceased to lay much if any stress on the Personal Reign, and forsaken other Irvingite peculiarities—does not some one of his own party attempt a biography of this eagle-winged man? Meanwhile, we propose to give what we know to be an honest, and believe to be a true, outline of his character and peculiar genius.

We have had not a few disappointments in our career, but none in one small department—that of sight-seeing and hero-hearing—equal to that which befell us in Edinburgh, in the year 1834. We were told that Edward Irving was to hold forth in Mr Tait's chapel, Canongate, on the forenoon of a February Sabbath-day. We went accordingly, and with some difficulty procured standing room in the gallery of a small chapel in an obscure and very dirty close. It was not he! The lofty, once black, but now blanched head did not appear over the throng, like the white plume of a chieftain over the surge of battle. Another came—(good Mr Tait, who had left the sweet moorland solitudes of Tealing, and resigned his living, to follow Irving)—and we never had another opportunity of seeing and hearing the giant of pulpit oratory. In the close of that year he died in Glasgow, a weary, worn, grey-headed, and broken-hearted man of forty-two.

What a life his had been! Short, if years are the only measurement of time; but long, if time be computed by the motion of the higher stars of thoughts, feelings, and sorrows! His life, too, was a strangely blended one. It was made up of violent contrasts, contradictions, and vicissitudes. At college his career was triumphant; he carried all easily before him. Then, after he obtained license, came two great reverses—unpopularity as a preacher, and, if general report be credited, a love-disappointment. He was discouraged by these to the extent of preparing to leave his native land, and undertake the duties of a missionary to the heathen. In this case he would probably have perished early, and his fame had been confined to the corner of an obituary in a missionary magazine. Then in a moment—whether fortunate or unfortunate, how shall we decide?—Chalmers heard him preach, and got him appointed as his colleague in Glasgow. Then London rose up to welcome him, as one man, and his pulpit became a throne of power, reminding you of what Knox's was in Edinburgh in the sixteenth century. Not since that lion-hearted man of God had thundered

to nobles and maids of honour, to senators and queens, had any preacher in Britain such an audience to command, and such power to command it, as Irving. There were princes of the blood, ladies high in honour and place, ministers of state, celebrated senators, orators, and philosophers, poets, critics, and distinguished members of the bar and of the church, all jostled together into one motley yet magnificent mass, less to listen and criticise, than to prostrate themselves before the one heroic and victorious man; for it seemed rather a hero of chivalry than a divine who came forward Sabbath after Sabbath to uplift the buckler of faith, and to wield the sword of the Spirit. The speaker was made for the audience, the man for the hour. In Glasgow he was an eagle in a cage; men saw strength, but strength imprisoned and embarrassed. In London, he found a free atmosphere, and eyes worthy of beholding his highest flight, and he *did*—"ye stars! how he did soar." It was a flight prompted by enthusiasm, sustained by sympathy, accelerated by ambition, and consecrated by Christian earnestness. There might be indeed a slight or even a strong tinge of vanity mingled with his appearances, but it was not the vanity of a fribble, it was rather that of a child. It was but skin deep, and did not affect the simplicity, enthusiasm, and love of truth which were the bases of his character and of his eloquence. His auditors felt that this was no mouthing, ranting, strutting actor, but a great good man, speaking from a full intellect and a warm heart; and that if he had, and knew that he had, a strange and striking personal presence, and a fine deep voice thoroughly under his management, and which he wielded with all the skill of an artist, that was not his fault. These natural and acquired advantages he could not resign, he could not but be aware of, he must use, and he did consecrate. What less and what more could he have done?

We have heard him so often described by eyewitnesses, not to speak of the written pictures of the period, that we may venture on a sketch of a Sabbath, during his palmy days, in the Caledonian Chapel. You go a full hour before eleven, and find that you are not too early. Having forced your way with difficulty into the interior, you find yourself in a nest of celebrities. The chapel is small, but almost every person of note or notoriety in London has squeezed him or herself into one part or another of it. There shine the fine open glossy brow and speaking face of Canning. There you see the small shrimp-like form of Wilberforce, the dusky visage of Denman, the high Roman nose of Peel, and the stern forehead of Plunket. There Brougham sits coiled up in his critical might, his chin resting on his hand, his eyes retired under the dark lids, his whole bearing denoting eager, but somewhat curious and sinister, expectation. Yonder you see an old venerable man with mild placid face and long grey hair: it is Jeremy Bentham, coming to hear his own system abused as with the tongue of thunder.. Near him, note that thin spiritual-looking little old individual, with quiet philosophic countenance and large brow: it is William Godwin, the author of "Caleb Williams." In a seat behind him sits a yet more meagre skeleton of man, with a pale face, eager eyes, dark close-cropped hair, and tremulous nervous aspect: it is the first of living critics, William Hazlitt, who had "forgot what the inside of a church was like," but who has been fairly dragged out of his den by the attraction of Irving's eloquence. At the door, and standing, you see a young, short, stout person, carrying his head high, with round face, large eyes, and careless schoolboy bearing: it is Macaulay, on furlough from Cambridge, where he is as yet a student, but hopes soon to be equal with the proudest in all that crowded Caledonian Chapel. And in a corner of the church, Coleridge—the mighty wizard, with more knowledge and more genius under that one white head, than is to be found in the whole of the bright assembly—looks with dim nebulous eyes upon the scene, which seems to him rather a swimming vision than a solid reality. And then, besides, there are belted earls, and feathered duchesses, and bishops not a few, and one or two of the Guelphic race,

included in a throng which has not been equalled for brilliance in London since Burke, Fox, and Sheridan stood up in Westminster Hall, as the three accusing spirits of Warren Hastings.

For nearly half-an-hour the audience has been fully assembled, and has maintained, on the whole, a decent gravity and composure. Eleven o'clock strikes, and an official appears, bearing the Bible in his hands, and thus announcing the approach of the preacher. Ludicrous as might in other circumstances seem the disparity between the forerunner and the coming Man, his appearance is welcomed by the rustle and commotion which pass through the assembly, as if by a unanimous cheer—a rustle which is instantly succeeded by deep silence, as, slowly and majestically, Edward Irving advances, mounts—not with the quick hasty step of Chalmers, but with a measured and dignified pace, as if to some solemn music heard by his ear alone—the stairs of the pulpit, and lifting the Psalm-book, calmly confronts that splendid multitude. The expression of his bearing while he does this is very peculiar; it is not that of fear, not that of deference, still less is it that of impertinence, anger, or contempt. It is simply the look of a man who says internally, "I am equal to this occasion and to this assembly, in the dignity and power of my own intellect and nature, and MORE than equal to it, in the might of my Master, and in the grandeur and truth of my message." Ere he proceeds to open the Psalm-book, mark his stature and his face! He is a son of Anak in height, and his symmetry and apparent strength are worthy of his stature. His complexion is iron grey, his hair is parted at the foretop, and hangs in sable masses down his temples, his eye has a squint, which rather adds to than detracts from the general effect, and his whole aspect is spiritual, earnest, Titanic; yea, that of a Titan among Titans—a Boanerges among the Sons of Thunder. He gives out the psalm—perhaps it is his favourite psalm, the twenty-ninth—and as he reads it, his voice seems the echo of the "Lord's voice upon the waters," so deep and far-rolling are the crashes of its sound. It sinks, too, ever and anon into soft and solemn cadences, so that you hear in it alike the moan and the roar, and feel both the pathos and the majesty, of the thunderstorm. Then he reads a portion of Scripture, selecting probably, from a fine instinctive sense of contrast, the twenty-third psalm, or some other of the sweeter of the Hebrew hymns, to give relief to the grandeurs that have passed, or that are at hand. Then he says, "Let us pray," not as a mere formal preliminary, but because he really wishes to gather up all the devotional feeling of his hearers along with his own, and to present it as a whole burnt-offering to Heaven. Then his voice, "like a steam of rich distilled perfumes," rises to God, and you feel as if God had blotted out the Church around, and the Universe above, that that voice might obtain immediate entrance to his ear. You at least are conscious of nothing for a time save the voice and the Auditor. "Reverence and lowly prostration are most striking," it has been said, "when paid by a lofty intellect, and you are reminded of the *trees of the forest clapping their hands* unto God." The prayer over, he announces his text, and enters on his theme. The sermon is upon the days of the Puritans and the Covenanters, and his blood boils as he describes the earnest spirit of their times. He fights over again the battles of Drumcleg and Bothwell; he paints the dark muirlands whither the Woman of the Church retired for a season to be nourished with blood, and you seem to be listening to that wild eloquence which pealed through the wilderness, and shook the throne of Charles II. Then he turns to the contrast between that earnest period and what he thinks our light, empty, and profane era, and opens with fearless hand the vials of apocalyptic vengeance against it. He denounces our "political expediences," and Canning smiles across to Peel. He speaks of our "godless systems of ethics and economics," and Bentham and Godwin shrug their shoulders in unison. He attacks the poetry and the criticism of

the age, inserting a fierce diatribe against the patrician Byron in the heart of an apology for the hapless ploughman Burns; knocking Southey down into the same kennel into which he had plunged Byron; and striking next at the very heart of Cobbett; and Hazlitt bends his brow into a frown, and you see a sarcasm (to be inserted in the next "Liberal") crossing the dusky disk of his face. Nay, waxing bolder, and eyeing the peers and the peeresses, the orator denounces the "wickedness in high places" which abounds, and his voice swells into its deepest thunder, and his eye assumes its most portentous glare, as he characterises the falsehood of courtiers, the hypocrisy of statesmen, the hollowness, licentiousness, and levity of fashionable life, singling out an individual notoriety of the species, who happens to be in more immediate sight, and concentrating the "terrors of his beak, the lightnings of his eye," upon her till she blushes through her rouge, and every feather in her head-dress palpitates in reply to her rotten and quaking heart. It is Isaiah or Ezekiel over again, uttering their stern yet musical and poetic burdens. The language is worthy of the message it conveys, not polished, indeed, or smooth, rather rough and diffuse withal, but vehement, figurative, and bedropped with terrible or tender extracts from the Bible. The manner is as graceful as may well co-exist with deep impetuous force, and as solemn as may evade the charge of cant. The voice seems fitted to fill vaster buildings than earth contains, and to plead in mightier causes and controversies than can even be conceived of in our degenerate days. The audience feel in contact, not with a mere orator, but with a demoniac force.

That this sketch is not exaggerated, we have abundant testimony. Canning repeatedly declared that Edward Irving was the most powerful orator, in or out of the pulpit, he ever heard. Hazlitt has written panegyric after panegyric upon him, annexing, indeed, not a few critical cavils and sarcasms, as drawbacks from his estimate. De Quincey called him once to us a "very demon of power," and uniformly in his writings speaks with wonder, not unmingled with terror, of the fierce, untamed, resistless energy which ran in the blood, and spoke in the talk and public oratory, of Edward Irving.

Yet there can be little doubt that these splendid exhibitions, while exciting general admiration in London, were not productive of commensurate good. They rather dazzled and stupified, than convinced or converted. They sent men away wondering at the power of the orator, not mourning over their own evils, and striving after amendment. They served, to say the most, only as a preface, paving the way for a volume of instruction and edification, which was never published; as an introduction, to secure the attention and gain the ear of the public, for a sermon, and an application thereof of practical power, which was never preached.

Irving, indeed, left himself no choice. He had so fiercely and unsparingly assaulted the modes of thought and styles of preaching which prevailed in the Church, that he was compelled, in consistency and self-defence, to aim at a novel and original plan of promulgating the old doctrines. By and by, intercourse with Coleridge, added to his own restless spirit of speculation, began to shake his confidence in many parts of our ancient creeds. A new system, of colossal proportions, founded, indeed, on the basis of Scripture, but ascending till its summits were lost in mist, began to rise under his Babylonian hand. He saw, too, for the first time, the mountain-ranges of prophecy louring before him, dark and cloud-girt for the most part, but with strange gleams shining here and there upon their tops, and with mysterious hands beckoning him onwards into their midst. These were to him the *Delectable Mountains*, and to gain the summit of Mount Clear became henceforth the object of his burning and life-long ambition. He toiled up these hills for many a weary hour and with many a heavy groan, but his strong faith and sanguine genius supported him; in the evening of each

laborious day he fancied he saw, on the unreached pinnacle,

"Hope enchanted smile, and wave her golden hair;"

and each new morning found him as alert as ever, climbing the mountains towards the city. Again and again, he imagined that he had reached the far-seen and far-commanding summit, and certainly the exaltation of his language, and the fervour of his spirit, seemed sometimes those of one who was beholding a "little of the glory of the place;" but, alas! the clouds were perpetually gathering again, and many maintained that the shepherds Watchful and Experience (whatever Sincere might have done) had not bid him "welcome to the Delectable Mountains," and that he had mistaken Mount Clear for Mount Error, which hangs over a steep precipice, and whence many strong men have been hurled headlong, and dashed to pieces at the bottom.

It was certainly a rapid, a strange, a fearful "progress," that of our great-hearted pilgrim during the ten last years of his life. What giants he wrestled with and subdued—what defiles of fear and danger he passed—what hills of difficulty as well as of delight he surmounted—what temptations he resisted and defied—what by-paths, alas! too, at times he was led to explore! All subjects passed before him, like the animals coming to be named of Adam, and were scanned and classified, if not exhausted; all methods of "concluding" men into the obedience of his form of the faith were tried; now he "piped" his Pan's pipe to the mighty London, that its inhabitants might dance; now he "mourned" to them his wild prophetic wail, that they might lament. All varieties of character he met with and sought to gain—all places he visited—all varieties of treatment and experience he encountered, and tried to turn to high spiritual account. We see him now preaching among the wildernesses of Galloway, and seeming a Renwick Redivivus, and now, Samson-like, overthrowing the Church of Kirkcaldy, by the mere pressure produced by his popularity. Now he is seen by Hazlitt laying his giant limbs on a bench in the lobby of the Black Bull, Edinburgh; and now, at five in the morning, in the same city, ere the sun has climbed the back of the couchant lion of Arthur Seat, or turned the flag floating over the Castle into fire, he is addressing thousands in the West Church on the glorious and dreadful advent of a Brighter Sun from heaven. Now we see him (as our informant did) sitting at his own hospitable morning board, surrounded by a score of disciples, holding a child on his knee, a tea-pot in his hand, and, with head and shoulders towering over the rest, pouring out the while the strong element of his conversation. Now we watch him shaking farewell hands with Carlyle, his early friend, whom he has in vain sought to convert to his views, and saying, with a sigh, "I must go up this hill Difficulty; thou art in danger of reaching a certain wide field, full of dark mountains, where thou mayest stumble and fall, and rise no more." Now he pleads his cause before the judicatories of the Church of Scotland, where he is sisted for error, but pleads it in vain; and in the afternoon of the day on which he has been cast out from her pale, stands up with tears in his eyes, and preaches the gospel in his own native Annan to weeping crowds. Now he prevents the dawning to translate "Ben Ezra" into English, and to prefix to it that noble apology for the Personal Advent, which a Milton's ink might have written and a martyr's blood sealed. Now he appears, after years of estrangement, before the view of his ancient ally, Carlyle, suddenly as an apparition, in one of the parks, grey-haired with anguish, pale and thin as a spectre, blasted, but blasted with celestial fire, and they renew friendly intercourse for one solemn hour, and then part for ever. And now he expires in Glasgow, panting to keep some dream-made appointment in Edinburgh, whither he was bound, but saying at last, with child-like resignation, "Living or dying, I am the Lord's."

From his life, thus cursorily outlined, we pass to say a few words about his works, and genius, and purpose. In com-

paring the divines of the seventeenth century with those of our own day, there is nothing more remarkable than this—the vastly greater amount of *good* literature produced by the former. They were not, to be sure, so much engrossed with soirees, Exeter-hall meetings, and visits, as the present race; but their pulpit preparations were far more laborious; and yet they found time for works of solid worth and colossal size. Our divines, too, are determined to print, but what flimsy productions theirs in general are, in comparison with the writings of Howe, Charnock, Barrow, and Taylor! There is more matter in ten of Charnock's massive folio pages, than in all that Dr Cumming has hitherto published. Chalmers and Irving, of course, are writers of a higher order, but even their works cannot be named beside those of our elder theologians, whether in learning, in genius, in power, in practical effect, or even in polish. In proof of our statement, we invite comparison between Chalmers's "Astronomical Discourses," or Irving's "Orations," and the "Christian Life" by old John Scott; and, waiving the question as to which of the three possesses the greatest intellectual power and eloquence, we challenge superiority on behalf of the elder, even in respect of correctness, grace, and every minor merit of style. Vain to say, that the works of Chalmers and Irving were written in the intervals of varied and harassing occupations. So were those of the old divines. Vain to say, that in the Scottish schools and colleges, at the beginning of this century, little attention was paid to composition—in the schools and colleges of the seventeenth century we believe there was still less. The true reasons are to be found in the simple fact, that these olden men were men of a still higher order of intellect—that, besides, they had more thoroughly trained themselves, and that a still loftier earnestness in their hearts was strengthened and inflamed by the influences of a sterner age. As Milton to Bailey and Tennyson, do Howe and Barrow stand to Chalmers and Irving.

Yet we mean not to deny that some of Irving's productions are worthy, not only of his floating reputation, but of that gift in him which was never fully developed, or at least never completely displayed. In all his writings you see a man of the present wearing the armour of the past; but it is a proof of his power, that, although he wears it awkwardly, he never sinks under the load. It is not a David clad in a Goliath's arms, and overwhelmed by them; it is the shepherd-giant, Eliab, David's brother, not yet at home in a panoply which is not too large for his limbs, but for wearing which a peaceful profession and period had not prepared him. Irving, in native power, was only, we think, a little lower than the men of the Elizabethan period, and of the next two reigns. He was originally of a similar order of genius, but he had given that genius a less severe and laborious culture, and he had fallen upon an age adverse for its display. Hence, even his best writings, when compared to theirs, have a certain stiff, imitative, and convulsive air. There is nothing false in any of them, but there is something *forced* in most. You feel always how much better Irving's noble, generous thoughts would have looked, had he expressed them in the language of his own day. Burke had as big a heart, a far subtler intellect, and richer imagination than Irving, and yet how few innovations, and fewer archaisms, has he ventured to introduce into his style. Hall and Foster, too, are as pure writers as they are powerful thinkers. Thus, too, felt the public, and hence the boundless popularity of the man was not transferred to his books. His two best productions are, unquestionably, his Prefaces to "Horne on the Psalms," and to "Ben Ezra." Nothing can be finer than his defence of David, and his panegyric—itself a lyric—on his psalms in the former, and the apostolic dignity, depth, and earnestness, which distinguish the latter. Why are these, and some of his other smaller works, not reprinted?

The genius of Irving was not of the purely poetical sort, it was rather of that lofty degree of the oratorical which verges

on the poetical. In other words, it was more intense than wide. His mind was deeper than that of Chalmers, but not so broad or so genial—it was in some departments more powerful, but not so practical. Many of his ideas, he rejoiced to see, as he said, "looming through a mist." Even the poetry that was in him was rather of the lyrical, than of the epic or dramatic sort. The lyrical poet does not look abroad upon universality—he looks straight up from his lyre—some intense idea at once insulates and inflames him, and his poetry arises bright, keen, and narrow, as a tongue of fire from the altar of a sacrifice. It was so with the prose of Irving; his flights were lofty, perpendicular, and short-lived. He has left very few of those long, swelling, sustained, and victorious passages which characterise the very highest of our religious authors, nor, on the other hand, are his pages thick with sudden and memorable felicities of thought. They are chiefly valuable for those brief patches of beauty, and bursts of personal feeling and passion, which recall most forcibly to those who heard him the remarkable appearance and unequalled elocution of the man. For, emphatically, he himself was "the Epistle." We admit most frankly, even though the admission should have the effect of producing distrust in our own capacity of criticising one whom we never saw, that, to know his genius fully, it was necessary to have seen and heard him—only those who did so are, we believe, able to appreciate the whole power that was condensed in that most marvellous "earthen vessel," the appearance of which, especially in his loftier moods, suggested an energy within, and a possibility before him, which made his works, and even his public preachings, seem poor in the comparison. Let us remember, too, the age at which he was removed. He was barely forty-two, an age when nine-tenths of clever men have not even begun to publish. And he had advanced at such a rate. It was true that latterly he fell into a singular hallucination, or, at least, a one-sidedness. A gentleman told us, that, calling on him once, and complaining that his published writings were not quite worthy of his fame, Irving pointed to a mass of MS. below his study table, and said, "Look here, sir! There are there scores of sermons incomparably superior to aught I have published. But when I wrote them I was under the impression that I must fight God's cause with the weapons of eloquence and carnal wisdom; I have learned otherwise since, sir, and believe that the simpler and humbler I am in my language, God will prosper my sermons and writings more; according to that Scripture, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.'" So far he was right, but so far also he was wrong; and in a short time, had he lived, he would have come to the golden mean. No preacher can be too simple, and none too sublime. Every preacher, who is able, should, by turns, be both. No writer can be too clear, and none too profound; and every writer should seek, if he has capacity, to be both. The author of that little card to Philemon, wrote also the Epistle to the Romans. Irving might, and would, had God spared his life, have attained a mode of writing which, by turns, would have attracted infants, and overpowered philosophers—made a Mary weep, and a Felix tremble—a child, like Timothy, prefer it to instructions of his grandmother Lois, and a doubter, like Thomas, cry out, "My Lord and my God."

To enter into a consideration of his creed, we have not room, and it might besides involve us in controversy. In some points we deem him to have been deeply and even fearfully mistaken, and his wildest errors, of course, were most popular among the weak; but in others, if he was in error, his errors were not deadly, and he erred in good company. But, whatever were or were not his mistakes, of one thing there could be no doubt: he was in earnest, and he strove to infuse his earnestness into the age. In another part of this volume, discoursing of Wilson, we have said that his wondrous powers were neutralised through his want of concentrated purpose; but certainly this cannot be charged against Irving. His objects during his life seem to have been two. Carlyle says, "This man strove to be a Christian priest." This was his first

but not his only purpose. He strove, secondly, to be a Christian prophet. Believing that the end of our present cycle of Christianity was at hand, and that God was about to introduce a new and most mighty dispensation, he felt impelled to proclaim that old things were fast passing away, and that all things were becoming new. This he did with all the energy of his nature. He smote with his hand—he stamped with his foot—he wept—he cried aloud and spared not—he rose early and sat late—he exhausted his entire energies, and gained an early grave in the proclamation of his message. The mantle of the Baptist seemed to have descended on him, and his sermons ceased to be compositions, and became cries—the cries of fierce protest, stern injunction, and fire-eyed haste:—"Repent ye! Repent ye! The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." How far his impressions on this subject were correct, is a question on which we enter not now. But surely, if Carlyle—*the* godless prophet of his period, the cursing Balaam of his day—demand and deserve credit for the half-insane sincerity with which he recites his lesson of despair, Irving must be much more admired for his intense earnestness, as he spent his last breath in crying, "Wo! wo! wo! to the inhabiters of the earth, because of the trumpets which are soon to sound, and the vials of vengeance which are soon to be outpoured."

Vain perhaps the inquiry, had he lived, what would have been his career? Many may be disposed to say, "Bedlam." We think not. Irving had, indeed, his deep hallucinations, and died under them; but he was a man still in his prime, his mind retained much of its original vigour; these hallucinations were only mists, which had strangled his sun at noon, and would have passed away, and left the orb brighter, and shining with a tenderer light than before. Others may say, "Popery." We trow not. He had too much Scottish sagacity, whatever some of his followers may have, ever to become the bond-slave of its degrading and mind-murdering superstitions. Carlyle, we know, supposes that at the time of his death Irving was ripe for that transfigured negation, that golden No, which he calls his creed. Here, too, we demur. That Irving admired and loved *Carlyle*, is notorious; but that a nature so enthusiastic, affectionate, sanguine, trustful, and holy, could ever have been satisfied with *Carlylism*, is to us inconceivable. Had he even, like Samson, been seduced under cloud of night into that city No, when his senses returned in the morning, he would have arisen in wrath, shaken himself as at other times, and carried away its gates with him in his retreat. A man like Irving would, we verily believe, rather have died trailing the car of Juggernaut, than have lived trusting to the tender mercies of a system which stereotypes despair, and in banishing a personal God out of the universe, reduces man to a hopeless puzzle, and life to a miserable dream.

We venture to say, that had Irving's life been spared, he would have forsaken his wilder nostrums, rid himself of the people around him, and calmed and sobered down into one of the noblest specimens of enlightened, sanctified, humble, Christ-like humanity which our age or any other has seen. He had the elements of all this within him. His heart was as warm as his genius was powerful. If in his pulpit efforts he sometimes seemed touching upon the angel, in private life, and in the undress of his mind, he "became as a little child." A thousand stories are extant of his generosity—his liberality—his forbearance—his simplicity, as well as of his piety and zeal. But it seemed good to Eternal Providence that his career should be as short as it was chequered, brilliant, and strange. And what, although he founded no sect deserving the name, wrought no deliverance on the earth, reared no pile of literary or theological handiwork—what, although he died sick of his associates, of his position, and of some of his cherished doctrines, and was emphatically "at sea"—he had lived, on the whole, a heroic life; his errors themselves had proclaimed the nobility of his nature; he died a meek and humble disciple of Jesus Christ, and ages may elapse ere the Church shall see his like

again. Of many lowly individuals, it can be truly said, as Christ said of the woman, "she hath done what she could;" but of how few men of Irving's powers, accomplishments, and splendid fame, can it be affirmed that duty was ever dearer to him than delight—that his purpose ever towered more loftily before him than his personal desires—that he loved God better than himself—that, emphatically, "he did what he could?" And the time has come when even those who most deeply differed from him in opinion, and do still in many things differ, may unite with his ardent worshippers in proclaiming him a man of whom the world was not worthy.

ISAAC TAYLOR.

FIRST SITTING.

CHRISTIANITY has been much indebted to its lay supporters and defenders. Without professing to give a complete list of the illustrious laymen who have either advocated its evidences or expounded its doctrines, we may simply remind the reader of the names of Milton, Newton, Boyle, Locke, Addison, Lord Lyttelton, Charles Leslie, Soame Jenyns, Dr Johnson, and Cowper, which belong to other ages than the present; while, as respects our own times, it may be enough to mention Coleridge, Southey, Douglas of Cavers, Thomas Erskine of Linlathen, Bowdler, Wilberforce, and Isaac Taylor. Of this latter list, Coleridge, partly in his other writings, but chiefly in his "Table-talk," illustrated the general and more remote bearings of Christianity, the points where it touches upon the other sciences. Southey has stood up bravely for its external bulwarks, and exemplified its consistent morals. Douglas, to use the language of another, "eagle-eyed and eloquent, has anticipated time, and, surveying the world, has laid down the laws of general amelioration." Erskine has admirably expounded the internal evidences of Christianity. Bowdler has strewn chaste flowers and Addisonian graces around its softer and more spiritual aspects. Wilberforce has laid bare its practical bearings. And Isaac Taylor has applied to the exposure of its corruptions and counterfeits the vigour of a more original genius, and the splendour of a richer, more varied, and more dazzling eloquence, as well as entered with a firm yet gentle tread on some of its more mysterious provinces.

Isaac Taylor styles himself, in the title of one of his own chapters, the "Recluse." He has long ago retired from the world into the sanctuary of his own family and his own soul. There, apart, but not askance—separate, but not utterly secluded—regarding the distant crowd more in sorrow than in anger, and more in love than in sorrow—he passes the "noiseless tenor" of his serene and busy days. "He hears the tumult and is still." His mind dwells habitually in a lone and lofty sphere. The cell of his soul is curiously constructed, elaborately adorned, hung with antique tapistry, decked with the rich paintings of the past, and steeped through its gorgeous windows in a dim religious light. There seated, he now muses with half-shut eye upon the history of bygone ages—now erects himself to lift the large folios of the Fathers—now swells with righteous indignation as he remembers the corruption and degeneracy which so soon and so long supplanted the first faith and love of the primitive age—now analyses the palpitating heart of the enthusiast, and now turns to the sterner task of baring the flinty spirit of fanaticism—now maps out the future history of the Church and world—and now sinks into sublime reverie, and in the trance of genius sees

"Hell, hades, heaven—the eternal how and where—
The glory of the dead, and their despair."

The leading power of Taylor's mind is

not argument, though he reasons often acutely and energetically—nor is it imagination, though he has much of this faculty too—nor is it original and native thought, though he strikes out many sparkles of intuition on his way—nor is it eloquence, though his words are often quick and powerful: it is meditation—that refined action of the mind which is softier than ratiocination, more sublime than thought, calmer than passion, and cooler than genius. He is inspired, not by the Muses nor by the Furies—is neither full of the demon nor of the god; but above him hangs the "Cherub contemplation," and over him broods her still but radiant wing. He evidently emulates that serene motion, or rather rest of intellect, in which Plato, under the skies of Greece, rejoiced, and which, beneath the profounder firmament of Palestine, "unloosed its golden couplets" over the head of the Essenes and the earlier Christian mystics. While keenly alive to, and indignant at, the errors and abuses of mysticism, he has very strong sympathies with its better spirit—with its voluntary solitude—its abnegation of self—its habits of still, spiritual communion with its own soul, and with the works and Word of God. He is, above most modern writers, an orientalist. That "land of the east—that clime of the sun," is the country of his adoption. His learning has been collected in the gardens of eastern literature. His imagination has an oriental vastness and brilliancy in its wings, and he strings his sentences with "orient pearl." His style, too, seems dyed in the colours of a hotter sun than that of his native land. His views of divine truth, often clear and definite, not unfrequently shade away into the dim, the unformed, and the obscure—into "regions where light glances at an angle only, without diffusing itself over the whole surface." He loves to linger, and it is only a stern sense of duty which prevents him from lingering always, in the dubious and debateable tracts which surround the clear and firm territory of Scripture truth. His piety, too, is peculiar. Though true and sound, it is not the simple, fervid devotion of his father or sister. It is more that of the burning seraph, than of the kneeling saint; it is the rapt contemplation of the divine attributes, rather than the abasement of a spirit overwhelmed in the view of its own guilt and misery. Blended, however, with this native tendency toward the lofty, the enthusiastic, and the dangerous realms of speculation—a tendency fostered, besides, by the course of his studies and the circumstances of his lot—there are counteracting and balancing elements in his mind, habits of deep submission to the divine testimony, a strong basis of solid judgment and varied knowledge, a distinct though not very deep vein of sarcastic observation, added to all the advantages which natural good sense must ever derive from English blood, birth, and training.

It is a curious fact, to which we have alluded more than once in literary history, that many writers have surpassed themselves, both in power and popularity, while writing under the shelter of the anonymous. Swift's "Tale of a Tub," which he never acknowledged, so far surpasses his other writings in fertility of invention, richness of humour, and force of style, that Dr Johnson refused to believe it his. Junius was strong only within the circle of that mysterious shadow which even yet rests on his name. Pascal's "Provincial Letters," the best of his works, were issued anonymously. So were those of Peter Plymley. The admirable newspaper criticisms of "Jonathan," and the eloquent diatribes of O. P. Q., owed not a little of their zest to the obscurity which rested on the names of the authors. Even the Waverley tales lost nothing from the doubt in which their authorship was for a season involved. We cannot tell how much of their power reviewers owe to their position—how much the masking adds to the momentum of their battery. And within a few years we have witnessed a book, written, indeed, in an easy and agreeable style, but developing an absurd theory, and swarming with blunders (the "Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation"), rising into popularity upon the twin wings of the

mischief of its intention and the mystery of its authorship. Whether this be owing to the greater liberty an anonymous writer enjoys — to the ideal position which, projected, as it were, out of himself, he for a season occupies—or to the twofold effect of mystification, in stimulating the mind of the writer, and provoking the curiosity of the reader, we do not stop to inquire. And perhaps it was in order to take advantage of this principle, that the subject of the present sketch, after having to little purpose wooed the attention of the world in *propria persona*, determined to disguise himself, and walk forth at length in the graceful mask of the author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm." The issue justified his most sanguine hopes of success. The book was fortunate in the time of its appearance. It came forth when the rage of Rowism and Irvingism was at its height—when, in every corner of the land, our old men, and women too, were seeing visions, and our young men and maidens were dreaming dreams. To analyse the subtle steam of enthusiasm when it was rushing from the boiler—to detect and expose its distinct proportions of false and true—was an attempt daring, hazardous, but useful, and loudly demanded by the urgencies of the time. It required, too, peculiar qualifications, which seemed all possessed by the anonymous author: learning—he was manifestly a ripe and good scholar; piety—his work glowed with it; eloquence—it heaved in every sentence; a vantage-ground lifting him above sectarian bias—the most acute were unable to tell to what denomination he belonged; soundness of religious sentiment—the strain of the whole work was strictly evangelical; and last, not least, a sympathy with true enthusiasm, while he exposed and reprobated the false—and the book was no cold analysis, no stern and callous anatomy. The work, besides, was written in an elaborate and ornate style; and though some of the more fastidious objected to its taste, and some of the more lynx-eyed detected marks of a manner affected, and a diction studiously disguised, yet, on the whole, the exclamation of the Christian Church was, "Behold, a master risen in Israel!" And straightway the question rose and ran, "Who is he?" Some bethought themselves of Douglas of Cavers as the probable author, in despite of the most marked difference in sentiment, style, manner, and cast of thought. Others, even less acute, fancied that here was Foster shaking off his giant sleep, and arising a new man—a new man indeed!—with a new intellect, a new learning, a new temperament, and a new vocabulary. In certain circles, there were frequent rumours of some great Christian unknown—some gentler Junius—some wondrous young Titan—who was to astonish, if not revolutionise, the religious world. And, if here and there a solitary finger pointed to the "Recluse" of Stamford Rivers as the real author, the scornful rejoinder was, "What had he done hitherto—what proportion is there between the 'Elements of Thought' and the 'History of Enthusiasm?' Such a lion-like man of God could never have issued from the still parsonage of Ongar." Popular meanwhile the book became, particularly among students, who did their best to imitate its style, or with greater success to imbibe its spirit. Its main leading proposition, that the difference between true and false enthusiasm is a difference of kind, not of degree—its rich and racy illustration—its familiarity with the primitive and darker ages of the Church—its grand insulated pictures, as of the Romish hierarchy and the monastic system—its cheerful, sanguine, religious spirit — the rose-coloured glow which rested on its every page—and not less, with some, its blazing faults and deliberate innovations of language—were among the elements of its first success; and even yet, we believe, in popular estimation, retain it at the head of its author's works.

Dearer to us, however, we confess, is his second work, the "Saturday Evening." It is a series of sublime meditations, bound together by a certain shadowy tie, involving a multitude of topics nearest and dearest to the author's heart, and tinged with the sweet and solemn hues of the approaching Sabbath. "Dreams" they will

be, they have been, called by the sceptical and the cold; but such an epithet, while it fails fully to express, fails entirely to damage their character. They open up, to the pious and imaginative, tracts of thought, like golden furrows in an evening sea, or like those glorious vistas which endlessly expand in an evening heaven. They are dreams, but dreams of night, of heaven, of immensity, and eternity; and if the dream be there, the ladder whose top reached unto the sky is not far off. Philosophical views of the present and the past are not wanting; but the mind of the contemplatist is perpetually, as if on the wings of the evening, borne away up through the wilderness of worlds above his head—or on to those bright pages of the earth's story which remain to be turned over—or in amid the starry circles of the heavenly hosts—nay, at times, a step or two, but no more, up towards

> "The sapphire throne—the living blaze,
> Where angels tremble as they gaze."

And yet, from the most daring of his excursions, he returns undazzled, and with lessons of practical truth, to his native homestead of earth. We like especially his glimpses of the coming Sabbath of the world, which, like a red western heaven seen through trees, perpetually interposes its splendid boundary to the stages of his thought. Next to this, we like his "Vastness of the Material Creation," where to "him the book of night is opened wide," and where he finds that a page thick with suns is not more true or glorious than one leaf of his Bible, where "voices from the depths of space proclaim a marvel and a secret;" but he discovers the marvel to be the old mystery of godliness, the secret to be only that of the Lord, which "is with them that fear him."

By a strange association, this book of "Saturday Evening" suggests to us the Saturday papers of the "Spectator." They are "alike, but oh how different!" Their subjects are the same: night, the stars, immortality, God, and heaven. But, since Addison's time, how much nearer have the stars approached! and yet, in another sense, how much farther off have they receded! At what a ratio of more than geometric increase, has the universe been multiplying to our eyes! And, with regard to the other topics, in what deeper channels do the modern's thoughts flow than those of the gentle "Spectator!" Their language is the same; but how different the classic coolness, the careless but inimitable graces, the modest but inestimable ornaments, the ease and sweet simplicity, of Addison's English, from the feverish heat and the rich tropical exuberance of Taylor's! Their religion is the same; but how different the faint though true glow of Christianity in Addison's page from that seraphic flame which burns in Taylor's! In what different ages written! The one a low and languid age—feeble in faith, feebler in love, feeblest of all in hope—in which Addison's sanctified genius shines as a sweet solitary star; the other a "juncture of eras"—a period of bustle, and heat, and hope, and progress, and anxious uncertainty, and listening silence; for do not most men expect the crisis of the earth to be coming soon—and do not "all creatures sigh to be renewed?"

We must permit ourselves a few observations upon "Fanaticism," and the "Physical Theory of a Future Life." "Fanaticism" was unfortunate in its subject. From the black and malevolent passions, even when portrayed by the hand of a master, men in general shrink. To dissect deformity, is a thankless task. And although it is said that the laws of disease are as beautiful as those of health, yet few have the patience or courage to wait till they are initiated into that terrible kind of beauty. Fanaticism, also, was a topic too like enthusiasm, to be susceptible of much novelty in the mode of treatment. And here and there you could detect traces of that mannerism and self-imitation which betray in authors their fear, at least, that their vein is nearly exhausted—a fear reminding us of the reluctance of the mariner to take soundings in a suspected shallow. The style, too, had not improved from the date of his former work—nay, it bore marks of great effort, was uneven and uneasy, and sinned

often against the laws of clearness, simplicity, and good taste. Something of the cloudy character of the theme seemed to have infected the writer; and the language was swollen, as if under the "fanaticism of the scourge." Still the book had bold bursts and splendid sweeping pictures; and it were worth while contrasting its estimate of Mahometanism with that of Carlyle, and wondering by what strange possibility a system which appears to the one a vast and virulent ulcer, should appear to the other a needful and healthful volcano, and through what transfiguring magic Mahomet the monster of the one, becomes Mahomet the hero of the other.

We hinted, a little before, that there was in Taylor's mind a strong but subdued tendency toward the mystic and supernatural. In all his works, he seems standing on the confines of the spiritual world, leaning over the great precipice, and, with beseeching looks, essaying to commune with the tremendous secrets of the final state. Entirely satisfied with the declarations of Scripture, that there is immortality for man, he yet must "ask that dreadful question at the hills which look eternal"—at the streams which "lucid flow for ever"—at the stars, those bright and pure watchers—at the deepest metaphysics of the human mind, and find in them something more than a faltering perhaps, in addition to the loud, confident, and commanding, "Thus saith the Lord." Nay, in the "Physical Theory of Another Life," he fairly bursts across the barriers, enters like a "permitted guest" within the mighty curtain which divides the living and the dead, and with infinite ingenuity maps out the dim provinces and expounds the mysterious conditions of that strange world. The intention of the work has been often misapprehended. It is no dogmatic dream, like the visions of Swedenborg—no "rushing in where angels fear to tread." Nor is it the mere mechanical fancy disporting itself on the theme, as in the reveries of Tucker (to whom Taylor, however, is considerably indebted); it is a long philosophical, modest, and earnest conjecture—a trial, as it were, how far the human mind can go in that shadowy direction, and how far it is possible, by combining psychological principles with Scripture hints, to build up a probable and life-like scheme of the future existence. How far he has been successful in this attempt we shall, of course, never know till we enter on that solemn state ourselves. But, in the meantime, it is curious to think of this writer's spirit hereafter, from the height of eternity, looking back and comparing the continent of glory he has reached with the meagre yet memorable map he drew of it, in the infancy of his being. And yet more curious it were to imagine an actual denizen of that sublime world smiling a gentle smile over this effort of the unborn child to conceive of the green earth, the gay sun, and the ever-burning stars!

The reader would be richly rewarded who should sit down and compare the Visions of heaven and hell ascribed to Bunyan with Taylor's theory of a future life. Both are rich, eloquent, and imaginative dreams—but how different in spirit, manner, style, and scientific construction! Between the two, what an interval has the religious mind traversed at least in the mode of expressing its thoughts! What a difference between the "melted gold" and coarse material torments of the one author, and the Ariel-like agonies of Taylor's supposed spirit, thrust out naked amid the quick agencies of an angry universe, where the silent light surrounds it as in a sea of fire, and where, through a thousand avenues, rushes in upon it the wrath of Heaven. And yet the author of these Visions (Bunyan he certainly was not) was not only a man of high genius, as some magnificent passages prove, but a thorough scholar; for its frequent literary allusions and use of scholastic terms sufficiently evince that he was quite up to, if not before, the spirit and learning of his times. How little, after all, do the revolutions of time and the advancement of the human mind add to our real knowledge, however they may modify our feelings and language, in respect to the awful futurity before us!

The path of human progress, on one side so free and boundless, on another is soon met by its uttermost confine on earth, as by a wall of black, solid, and frowning marble!

Isaac Taylor is of "virtuous father, virtuous son." The praise of Taylor of Ongar was in "all the churches." His daughter, Jane Taylor, a woman of a highly cultivated and most feminine intellect, author of several well-known works, has been long dead. Isaac, at first designed for the Dissenting pulpit, became a barrister in preference, but has for many years resided in retirement at Stamford Rivers, educating his family, and prosecuting his own delightful and holy studies. A writer in the "Edinburgh Review" (Sir James Stephen) has given a description of his early feelings and his present habits of life, displaying at once the warmth of personal friendship and the sympathy of kindred intellect and kindred sentiments. We learn with interest from it, that Taylor is an expert and eager angler, as well as the far-famed author of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm;" that he spends his Saturday mornings in directing the sports of his dear children; while his Saturday evenings are devoted to the loftiest meditations which can engross the soul of mortal.

SECOND SITTING.

To commence this second notice of the great author of the "Saturday Evening" and his works, we have selected an appropriate season — a Saturday evening, after a day of constant and hard intellectual work, with the mists of autumn hanging in divine festoons over the sky, and concealing the stars which had begun lately to come out from their grave of summer sunshine, and to shine like the risen and glorified dead in the serene heaven, and with the prospects of the day sacred to the memory of the resurrection of Jesus casting their gentle shadow forward over our souls. Thus, ere soothing ourselves to calm and rest, as we do every Saturday evening, by perusing some of the glorious words of Bunyan, the dreamer of Elstowe, let us first begin our tribute to the dreamer, scarcely less imaginative, of Stamford Rivers.

Taylor never, so far as we know, mounted a pulpit or preached a sermon. But a Christian priest, alike by lineage, and by nature, and by training, he unquestionably is. He is one of the few of his surpassing order of intellect who in the present day *are* Christians, whatever they may *avow* themselves to be. He is not only a Christian, but a Christian of the most decided kind, and has gathered up the despised names of "saint," "fanatic," &c., and bound them as a crown unto him. In search of an ideal of Christianity, he has looked at and bowed aside most of our modern forms of it—tarried reverently near the Reformation for a season, and then passed on his way—gone shuddering, but keenly observant, through the midst of the mediæval ages—paused almost patronisingly over the Patristic period, and at last fixed his thought at that singular point where the Primitive *began* to merge into the Patristic, where the Christ seemed to sink back into the Moses, and *there* raised his Eureka, and set up his pillar. We wish that he had gone back a little farther, and striven to reproduce and revive the naked substance of Christianity, as it was left by Jesus of Nazareth himself; but still we feel profoundly grateful for the elaborate and argumentative statements he has given in proof of the vitality which continued to breathe in Christianity till the anti-Christian leaven had fairly begun to work; and no less for the exhibition he has presented us of the causes of the Church's decline.

Taylor, while a Briton by birth, is in soul and essence an Orientalist. His sympathies, his genius, his scholarship, his temperament, his peculiar kind of piety, all link him to Palestine, and the lands still nearer the sun, where man was first let down from heaven—where he spent his brief Paradisal period—where he fell—and whence the original currents

of the race flowed westward, diverging and deepening as they flowed. Like the window of the prophet Daniel, Taylor has his imagination and heart always "standing open towards Jerusalem." Like Christian in the "Pilgrim," he sleeps in a chamber looking towards the east. His imagery and language are oriential—"barbaric pearl and gold." We know not if he ever travelled to the lands of his dreams, but certain we are, that no man of this century would derive more solemn pleasure from such a journey. We love to fancy him sailing on the Lake of Galilee, and conjecturing which of the sunburnt mountains around was that to which the Saviour went up to pray, "himself alone;" or pacing, in profound awe and silence, the beach of that sea which was once Sodom; or sitting by Jacob's well; or looking down from the top of Tabor on the gorge of Endor, and the beautiful plain of Jezreel; or prostrate in prayer under the trees of Gethsemane; or walking out, pensive and alone, towards Emmaus; or looking from some giant peak in Lebanon eastward, and northward, and southward, and westward; or marking the windings of the infant Jordan; or mounting a hill of Moab in search of Pisgah; or bathing in "Abana and Pharpar, lucid streams;" or climbing the savage Sinai, by the very path up which Moses trembled, and looking abroad from its summit upon peaks, and crags, and valleys, and deserts, bare as a lunar landscape, and which the ire of Heaven seems to have crossed over in a scorching whirlwind, and made for ever desolate! Few books of travels to Palestine have in them much poetry. M'Cheyne, for instance, passes through all these haunted spots, and seems, and is, deeply affected by their memories; but, being utterly destitute of genuine imagination, he fails in making us realise the solemn scenery of the Promised Land—his enthusiasm is entirely pious, instead of being a compound of the pious and the poetical, as Taylor's would be. Lamartine and Chateaubriand go to the other extreme, and become nauseously sentimental. Warburton (in the "Crescent and Cross") and Disraeli (in "Tancred") come nearer to our ideal. But we wait for the avatar of the true traveller and reporter of his travels through that wondrous land, where God did desire to dwell—where he took on him flesh, and looked at his own creation through human eyes—and where he shall, we believe, dwell again, at that prophetic period, when once more to Jerusalem shall the tribes go up, and when the "Holy City," inhabited by the "Holy One of Israel," shall become the praise and the joy, the centre and the glory, not of the earth only, but of the universe!

To the poetic enthusiasm and piety of the East, Taylor has annexed much of the acute intellect, balancing logic, and varied culture of the West. Yet, we confess, we like him always best when he is following the original bent of his mind. We care very little for his opinions on such men as Chalmers and Foster. His idiosyncrasy is so different, that he does not understand, although he loves them both; nor, perhaps, did either of them fully comprehend him. Hence, in his articles on them in the "North British Review," he talks very laboriously, very eloquently, and, to appearance, very profoundly about them, as if he were a kindred spirit. Whereas, in fact, Chalmers was a resuscitated apostle of the first century; Foster was, in all but superstition, a monk of the tenth; Taylor is a Platonic Christian of the second, or Justin Martyr age. Chalmers was the genius of activity, seeking to make things better; Foster was stiffened into an attitude of solitary protest and stationary wonder at the evils which are in the world; while Taylor calmly and dispassionately, yet with enthusiastic hope, contemplates its good and its evil as a whole. Often, indeed, he leaves this quiet collateral attitude, and rushes down into the field of action or controversy; but it is awkwardly, and his efforts, like those of elephants in the battles of yore, are sometimes less destructive to foes than to friends. His logic is often clumsy; his satire, sarcasm, and invective are heavy; his controversial weapon is as blunt as it is ponderous; his style is often cumbered and involved; but in that mood of mind partly poetic, partly

philosophic, partly devout, in which the Essenes and ancient Mystics indulged, he stands among the authors of this age *facile princeps*. He can reason; but he is better and truer to himself when he broods, with half-shut dreamy eye, as did his spiritual fathers, under the divine evenings of the East, when the moon was rising over the mountains of Moab, or as the stars were leaning upon Sinai, now silent in his age, and wrapped as in eternal wonder, at the memory of the more awful burden of wrath and glory which once rested for forty days and forty nights upon his quaking summit.

Taylor is often speculating about the characteristics and tendencies of the present age. These speculations are always ingenious, always eloquently expressed, sometimes just and profound. But, more frequently, a certain vague and dim unreality seems to swathe them, and you are tempted to apply to them the expression, less truly applied to the thought of Coleridge, "philosophic moonshine." He cannot deal clearly or cogently with the present; his congenial fields are the past and the future. His soul loves to penetrate the silent seas of the past, and to seek to resuscitate the mighty primeval forms which once peopled them. He talks to Moses and Isaiah, to Peter, and John, and Paul, to Justin Martyr, to Origen, to Augustine, and to Chrysostom, as to brethren and neighbours. If you can hardly say of him, with Spenser,

> "The wars he well remember'd of King Nine,
> Of old Assaracus, and Inachus divine,"

yet his memory, his fancy, and his heart have gone back a great way, and have collected very rich resurrection spoils. Nor is he less trustworthy or delightful in his views of the future. He is a Millenarian. We do not mean that he is as certain as was Edward Irving, or as hopeful as we are, of the *Pre*-millennial Advent; although various passages in his writings would indicate that he inclines to that ancient hope of the Church. But he is a profound believer in the fact that a long bright evening is to succeed this dark and stormy day, and that Christianity is to gain its final triumph through supernatural aid and intervention. On this hope he speaks; and beautiful are many of his excursions into that Promised Land, which lies beyond the red Jordan of the "Last Conflict of Great Principles." Our wonder is, that, with these views, Taylor is so sanguine in his expectation of good from some of the methods of spreading or defending Christianity which at present prevail. He believes that we are to have help from on high; and yet he seems hardly to believe that we absolutely *need* it, and that all our present schemes and buttresses can only break the wave of assault, but cannot increase much farther the aggressive power of our faith.

We shall never forget our first perusal of the "Natural History of Enthusiasm." It was in golden summer-tide, in the fair city of Perth, with the Tay adding its fine murmured symphony, and with the blood of eighteen beating almost audibly in our veins, as we read aloud some of its more glowing passages. We remember no *prose* work, with the exception of Chalmers's "Astronomical Discourses," and Hazlitt's "Lectures on English Poetry," by which we were ever so much electrified. We did not then perceive, or at least feel, its faults —the *splendida vitia* of its style, or the hasty generalisations of much of its thinking; but the compound it presented of philosophic tone, poetic genius, and pious spirit, was to us then as new as it was welcome. We had waded through much metaphysics of the Locke and Hume school as through dusty sand—we had revelled in the poetry of Milton, Byron, Cowper, and Thomson—we had read all the common theological writers—but here we found a species of writing which seemed to include all the elements which were presented separately in the other three classes, and we were tempted to cry Eureka! Years and after-reading have somewhat modified our estimate; we would not now compare the "Natural History of Enthusiasm," for suggestiveness, originality, and richness of thought, to such books as Foster's "Essays," which gained more slowly our admiration. The style now seems to us forced and unnatural;

but still the treatise must ever have its place and praise as a masterly and powerful analysis of one of the most singular phases of the human mind; perhaps the first upon the same scale ever conducted at once on philosophical and Christian principles.

It added considerably at the time to the interest of this treatise—first, that the author's name was unknown; and, secondly, that it appeared at—nay, properly speaking, sprang out of—a period when men's minds were much agitated, and when many "expected that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Wrapped in soft shadows, another Great Unknown had come upon the stage. How interesting the two alternatives presented! If it was an old friend, what a universal genius to be able to present a face so new! If a new author, and especially a young one, what a Christian Colossus he must be! And then the tone he assumed was very peculiar and exciting—from its decision, its moderation, its avoidance of extremes, and its oracular depth and dignity. He seemed the very man for the hour! He commenced with recognising distinctly the existence and the uses of genuine enthusiasm, nor did he deny the fact that there were prospects in the future of Christianity which might justify unbounded ardour of expectation; but, having premised this, he proceeded to curb the fiery steeds of his aspiration, to guard them by the bounds of Scripture, and to guide them on to the goal of common sense. You saw evidences in the book that the author was one in whose veins the tide of enthusiasm had originally boiled very strongly; but who had, by culture, by stern investigation, and by habitual submission to the Word of God, modified and tamed it; so that, while no critic could call him cold, none could accuse him of undue warmth. The book consequently became very popular; was strongly commended by Dr Chalmers from his chair; was widely circulated and closely imitated by a large class of aspiring youths. Hall alone, with his usual fastidiousness, objected to the style; which, he said, "wearied and fretted his mind," and, with his usual acuteness, saw and pointed out proofs that the author was seeking to disguise himself by a terminology in part affected.

Taylor's second work was his "Saturday Evening." We shall speak, however, first of his "Fanaticism." The subject of Fanaticism was less pleasing than that of Enthusiasm, and the execution not so happy. In his first work, his field lay mainly in the first three centuries, when the Christian Faith sat like morning upon the mountains—a dawn already indeed partially overcast, but still a dawn, fresh, strong, and beautiful. In his third, he was compelled to pierce the shadow of that deep eclipse which shrouded religion and the middle ages in night, and during which the baleful fires of superstition and fanaticism produced a horrid counterfeit of day. In his first work you saw Stylites on his pillar; the religious hermit in his cave; the enthusiast meditating below the large stars of that sky which had kindled the poetic splendours of a Job. In "Fanaticism" you saw the lonely monk brooding, or agonising, or studying, or sinning in his gloomy cell; the Arabian soldier twanging his bowstring, flourishing his scimitar, and shouting, "No God but Allah, and no prophet but Mahomet;" the stern Crusader, with all the passions of hell in his heart as he stepped from his galley on the shore of the Holy Land, and expanded in the sultry atmosphere the standard of the Cross; the sullen inquisitor dreaming of ghastlier dresses for the victims of future auto-da-fés, or of drier dry-pans, and slower fires, and deeper dungeons, for the enemies of Holy Mother Church; and the savage persecutor lifting up his torch, and, with an eye fiercer than it, stepping forward to the pile, and completing the poet's image of the

"Pale martyr in his shirt of fire."

Most powerful were some of Taylor's pictures, and profound not a few of his disquisitions; but, as a whole, the work rather pained and horrified, than satisfied or delighted. It was a faithful daguerreotype of a disgusting subject; and a portion of the disgust was reflected upon

the execution, and laid in charge to the artist.

Without dwelling on Taylor's "Physical Theory of Another Life," his "Spiritual Despotism," or his contributions to the Tractarian controversy, we come to his best work, the "Saturday Evening." This is a series of interesting, and often profound, meditations on such subjects as the stars, the future world, the relation in which our earth stands to the universe, and the future struggles and triumphs of the Church. Compared to all the other meditations in the language, those of Taylor are colossal in their merit. His chapters on the vastness of the material universe are particularly striking. No one has better expressed the unostentatious and silent force with which the "Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handiwork." They tell so much, and that so quietly! Silently the sun comes out of his chambers; silently the great moon climbs the September air, and silently she looks down on the silvered sea and the yellow corn; silently, one by one, come forth the host of heaven; silently stretches away that stream of suns—the galaxy; silently as ghosts of rivers, do its two arms diverge, and wander on; and silently does even the comet, on his fiery wheels, enter the shuddering sky. Were it otherwise, we could not endure their mighty speech. What ear could bear to listen to the thunder of the axle-tree of the sun as he passed us by; or even to that "sphere-music" fabled of old to pervade the universe? Were it otherwise, in another sense still —were we to become conversant with the moral laws and conditions of the Great Whole—our state of seclusion would be entirely broken up, and our probation interrupted, But here, too, all is silence. And yet "there is no speech and no language where their voice is not heard." They speak in concert and perfect harmony. Even the comet that has abruptly and without warning swum into this autumn sky is not contradicting, but confirming, the silvery utterance of every smallest planet that shivers out the name "God" to the listening night. They speak constantly—"day unto day uttering speech, night unto night teaching knowledge" —the sun passing on to Sirius, and he to Arcturus, and Arcturus to Ursa Major and his sons, and they to Orion—the great revolving chorus. They speak universally; for where is there a spot so solitary where that star is not seen? and how, at this very hour, are a thousand observatories, and ten thousand times ten thousand eyes, gazing at our fiery stranger as he is telling them in his own mysterious speech concerning his Creator! They speak with divine majesty; and Taylor, to show this in the most striking manner, takes us away to the remoter planets of the system, where the sun is faint and sickly with distance—where the glory of alien firmaments seeks to struggle through the noon; where, at evening, our earth is seen afar off as a dim trembling speck on the verge of the sky; and where, at night, a solid flood of splendour seems to burst from every pore and crevice of the crowded heavens!

Returning to the earth again, our author fails not to give her her true place in the august system. Little as she relatively is, she has a peculiar importance as a spot selected for the development of certain great moral purposes of the Almighty. *Here* have been announced tidings of vastly greater importance than all these skies ever have uttered, or ever can. These ancient heavens, young, too, as on creation's day, yet cannot assure us of God's infinity—only of his prodigious superiority to the children of men. All the crowded space we see or can imagine, bears no more proportion to real infinitude than a man's hand does to the marble firmament. *That* surpassing truth must come from the profundities of our own mental and moral nature. The heavens cannot reveal the Father. They show a vague kindness, floating to and fro; but not a special love searching for, to embrace, its children. Of fallen stars they do assure us; but they tell us not that we have fallen from a height higher far than they. Concerning Christ's salvation, too, they are dumb. The "bright and morning star" shines not

amid those forests of fire. And on man's immortality they cast not a gleam of light, although for ages they have been shining on his grave. For all this intelligence we must go below, or rather above, the stars—to the Bible—"the Book of God—say, rather, God of Books;" and to this star of Bethlehem, Taylor reverently and tenderly conducts us.

Years have elapsed since we read the "Saturday Evening," and yet we believe that in our two last paragraphs we have not misrepresented the author's purport, although the language and imagery are our own. We wish we had time to proceed and analyse some of the other papers, especially those in which he paints the approaching days of earth. The author of the "Coming Struggle" has terribly vulgarised that field of Armageddon. How differently does Taylor, uplifting as he goes "the shout of a king," tread its mist-covered but magnificent plain! Read, to see this, the noble paper entitled the "Last Conflict of Great Principles," or one or two of the chapters which succeed. We wish, too, that we could follow his daring but holy guidance in amid the celestial ardours, and the heavenly hierarchies, rising (as in David Scott's immortal illustrations of the "Pilgrim's Progress") tier above tier, circle above circle, gallery above gallery, towards the ineffable blaze of glory which terminates the view, and in which other systems, and firmaments, and orders of being are dimly discovered, as in a shaded mirror, or seen swimming like motes in the sunbeam. But we forbear, and simply recommend all these contemplations of the most contemplative mind of modern days to our readers. Being "nothing if not critical," we might have dwelt on some of Taylor's faults—on his occasional affectations of manner, turgidities of language, and confusions of imagery. But this is useless, as, in spite of all these, and partly perhaps in consequence of them, he has already obtained a fixed and lofty position among our prose religious writers. We shall merely, ere closing this paper, advise him, in the name of all his genuine admirers, to give up lecturing in public. This is a field which most men of his order are gradually resigning, in weariness or disgust. It is a field, too, for which he is not specially or at all qualified. His manner and delivery are bad; his voice husky, and perpetually interrupted by a cough; and his matter, admirable as it seems in the closet, falls flat and dead on a popular audience.

HAMILTON OF LEEDS.

It is now ten years since we, attracted by the tidings that a live Leeds lion had reached a norland town, hurried away (breaking an engagement on the road) to hear Dr Hamilton preach. It was a Sabbath evening. We had previously read and re-read his first volume of sermons (besides having had the pleasure of often hearing him quoted *without* acknowledgment by aspiring sprigs of divinity in academies, pulpits, &c.!), and had heard a great deal that was curious and somewhat contradictory about his character and habits. There appeared before a tolerably large audience a man rather above than under the middle size in stature, dressed very carefully in clerical costume, with a brow not at all remarkable for either height, breadth, or expression, with eyes completely sunk in spectacles, with a cheek like a baker's, *pale with fat*, and with a huge round Sir John Falstaff corporation—so much so, that, like the immortal Will Waddle,

> "He look'd like a tun,
> Or like two single gentlemen roll'd into one."

This odd composite figure began the services of the evening in rather a slow, but sufficiently solemn manner, prayed fluently and shortly, and gave out as his text, Eph. iv. 9: "Now that he ascended,

what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?" At this text we started, for we had ourselves recently been exposed to much contemptible and vexatious obloquy for having freely expounded certain uncommon sentiments about the intermediate state of souls; and we believe many more in the audience waited with intense interest to hear what view the distinguished stranger should take of a subject which the text so obviously suggested. To our great delight, Dr Hamilton, at much length, and with perfect plainness and decision, supported Bishop Horsley's notion of a Hades in the centre of the earth, into which Christ descended. We have since given up all attempts at fixing the *locality* of the invisible state; but we shall never forget the feelings of pleasure and gratitude with which we heard the Christian veteran taking up a doctrine which, as advocated by a younger and feebler tongue, had been rancorously and ignorantly abused, binding it as a crown unto him, and sending some at least of its opponents home, to amend their conclusions, or, at least, to refurbish their charity.

The discourse, otherwise, was not in the preacher's highest style, and was spoiled by a mouthing, monotonous delivery. But a few evenings subsequent, we heard him to much greater advantage. It was at a public missionary meeting in the same city. There Dr Hamilton delivered a speech on the philosophy of missions, which, for grasp of intellect, beauty and energy of style, extent of knowledge, and for eloquence kindling into poetry, might have come from the golden lips of Burke himself. We were ashamed of the effect on the audience. Some yawned; others looked round to see how others were looking; one or two seemed inclined, yet afraid, to sleep; some stared at the stranger, because he *was* a stranger and a doctor; a few ghosts of cheers shivered through the meeting, and disappeared into Hades as soon almost as they had arisen; the platform alone—and that "not too much"—appreciated the speaker. And when the orator sat down, up rose a nameless missionary from China, who uttered a clatter of silly anecdotes, and made the meeting laugh or weep, or at least listen with the profoundest attention, till, we believe, the close. That consummation, however, we did not wait to witness, as, about the middle of the missionary's speech (which was the speech of the evening), we made our escape, amazed at the materials of which most of our religious meetings are composed, and sickened at their wretched incapacity for judging of the higher displays of moral and intellectual power. But are our London or Edinburgh religious audiences one whit better? What speakers there, too, are generally the favourites? Those who have laid in the largest stock of claptrap commonplaces, and can most dexterously deliver them. What passages in speeches or lectures given there are sure to be starred with cheers? Those precisely which the writer had half drawn his pen through, or spared only when he remembered that they might do admirably in that atmosphere, and that those hunger and thirst most violently for platitudes, who most eagerly trample on pearls.

It is not our province or present plan to detail the events in Dr Hamilton's life. His clerical career was marked by very few notable events. He was early placed over a Congregational Church in Leeds. His popularity there at first was unbounded. It arose in a night; but, alas! it perished in a night—for a season. The occasion of this was curious. When he was about the age of twenty-one, a murderer was executed at Leeds. The circumstance created great excitement; and Hamilton tried to improve it, in a sermon delivered in the open air to 10,000 people. The effect was great; and he was requested to publish it. In an evil hour he did so. It swarmed with faults—particularly with new and proud-sounding words—although it contained unmistakeable evidences of original thinking and rhetorical power. The critics knew their quarry, and flocked eagerly on it. Its odd words they separated from the context, and held up to unmitigated ridicule. Its big sentences they pronounced to ring hollow, and nailed, like bad money, to

their counters. One figure was their especial favourite—"Like an avalanche from the Andes." A similar fate has happened to many a young minister's first-published discourses. The singularity is, that in Hamilton's case it immediately emptied his church, or, at least, reduced it to a skeleton. His crowds sank instantly; and those who entered his chapel did so with the fear of bombast before their eyes, and as if they were doing a guilty thing. How the young divine must have felt, as he saw the few eyes that remained looking up queerly as he closed some splendid paragraph, or heard his people ominously whispering to each other as he threw out some bolder epithet! We have glanced over the famous sermon thus unceremoniously pilloried; and can testify that, with many defects and a few absurdities, it contains a great mass of vigorous thought and splendid writing, and might do honour to any divine of the day. Its great fault was—it appeared ere its author had fully made his reputation, and ere people were afraid to sneer even at his errors, lest the sneer should be driven back with tenfold bitterness in their own teeth.

We wish we saw a collection of the first failures—the early bad or unsuccessful works of good authors. It were a very interesting and instructive miscellany. Think of Thomson's "Lines to his Cat;" Johnson's translation of "Lobo's Abyssinia;" Pope's early Epic; Shelley's "Rosicrucian" and "Zastrozzi;" Byron's volume of juvenile poems, which *preceded* the "Hours of Idleness;" Burke's contributions to the "Annual Register;" Southey's "Wat Tyler;" Campbell's and Macaulay's Prize Poems, &c. &c., bound up along with Hamilton's "Sermon on an Execution," and Thomas Binney's *immortal* (!) "Life of Morell"—what a medley it would make! To dunces how consoling; to snarling critics how refreshing; to the authors themselves, if alive, how humiliating—to all, how important, as showing from how small a germ greatness often springs; how useful culture and practice are to genius; how dangerous it is to despise the "day of small things;" and how impossible it is to quench the smoking flax or to break the bruised reed of that true intellect, the great characteristic of which is, that it credits the *whisper from behind*, which utters to it continually the four great words—"Bear—aspire—believe—grow!"

But to return to Hamilton. He bated not a jot of heart and hope; but, on the contrary, in the shade of the obscurity which now fell upon him, he set himself calmly to work out materials for a noble structure of future reputation. He studied, he read, he thought—he pruned away at his style; but made this latter, perhaps, too much a subordinate part of his task. We need not follow the steps of his success at such length as we have recorded his early misadventure. Suffice it, that he first secured the esteem and admiration of Leeds, as a town, by mingling wisely in its public matters, and fit the encouragement of its literary and other institutions; he then gradually gathered around him an excellent, select, and attached congregation; he next struck out upon the sea of religious literature, and by his successive volumes of sermons, by his "Nugæ Literariæ," by his essay on "Missions," and by his congregational lecture on "Future Rewards and Punishments," reared up a solid, if not a sky-striking or world-seen, pillar of fame. He then gained, without seeking, wishing, or needing, the title of Doctor—a title still so prized by solemn noodles, so despised by most men of the right stamp; and, in fine, he became—next to Robert Hall and John Foster, in point, not of popularity, but of power—the first Dissenting Clergyman in England.

As for other particulars of his life and character, how he enjoyed his dinner, and made his diary a "diary of dishes"—how he luxuriated in new salmon, veal cutlets, turbot, and green peas—how he loved to lave his body in the ocean, mistaken, perhaps, by distant onlookers for a grampus plunging in the waves—how fond he was of music, and skilful, too, in the art—how he several times rose on ambitious but unequal wings toward the heights of verse, but came plump down again—how kind,

cordial, and affectionate he was in all his relationships—how much his people and friends loved him—how fond he was of antiquities and of fine scenery—how he bathed in the Scottish lakes, *pecked* (Anglicé, panted) up the Scottish mountains, and made grim Glencoe almost relax its iron jaws, as it saw this "oily man of God" wending his slow and sweltering way through its rugged and steep defile—how humour of the richest and best-natured kind oozed out of him—how sincere, notwithstanding all his small peccadilloes and peculiarities, was his piety—how pure were his morals, and diligent and devoted his life, and in what a meek, triumphant frame his spirit at last departed,—is not all this chronicled faithfully in the pages of Dr Stowell, his excellent biographer?

Although the poetical specimens which Dr Hamilton has left are not first-rate, yet his prose proves that he was constitutionally a poet. Too short-winded to climb to the top of the terrible Twins, which form the peaks of the Parnassian hill, he reached at least the shoulder of the mountain, and saw the fair and noble landscape which can be commanded even from that point of view. He reminds us very much of dear "Jemmy Thomson—Jemmy Thomson O," author of the "Seasons," alike in body and mind. A certain lazy greatness distinguished both of them. Both had a fine genius, working in a temperament intensely sensuous. Their position, perhaps, in a great degree determined the differences between them. Had Thomson, as he originally intended, become a clergyman, the restraints of the profession would have modified the luxuriance of his temperament; his genuine sincerity, benevolence, and simplicity of heart, would have led him to do his pastoral work in a creditable way; and his genius would have expressed itself in glorious sermons. Had Hamilton become a poet, or *litterateur*, he had probably led a life very similar to that of Thomson, and obtained literary triumphs of the same order. But, as it was, Thomson's heavy foot paced the pavements of London, by day and night; Hamilton's mounted the groaning steps of the Leeds pulpit. Thomson indulged in Scotch ale; Hamilton in Scotch ham and *collops*. Thomson *praised* bathing, early rising, and a hundred other virtues he had never the resolution to practise; Hamilton practised as well as praised them. Thomson ate peaches from the walls, with his hands in both pockets; Hamilton gave descriptions, *vivâ voce*, of dinners which brought the "water into the mouth" of bon-vivants, and (as Milton speaks of strains which

> "Might create a soul
> Under the ribs of death")

which might have created an appetite under the ribs of repletion. Thomson wrote the "Castle of Indolence," and the "Seasons;" Hamilton the "Nugæ Literariæ," and two or three admirable series of sermons.

Dr Hamilton's writings show us genius, but genius hampered and encumbered in all its movements. His style has well (borrowing an expression of Coleridge's) been called "asthmatic—a succession of stepping-stones; not a plain, firm, solid road." His sentences are almost all short. Now, a short sentence occurring occasionally is a very delightful change from long prosaic, or even long poetic, periods. If it be bright as well as short, you feel as it were tempted to take it up in your hand, like a shining pebble from the summer brook. It adds, too, much to the effect of the longer sentences which have gone before, or may be coming after it. It is like a milestone on a long uniform road, on which you sit down and rest for a season. But, on the other hand, a chain of short sentences is in general more tedious than a chain of long ones. If they are all equally brilliant, you tire of them; if they are all, or most of them, dull, you feel to each precisely as you do in the society of a little man, who is not so clever as most little people are. In all cases, "labour dire it is, and weary wo," to wade through a volume, or even a sermon, of such pages.

This defect, and this principally, has lessened the influence and popularity of Hamilton's works. He had almost all

the other qualities of a first-rate writer. He had a power of close and careful argument; he had wide, varied, and accurate learning; he had a vocabulary of great richness, if not always of severe selection; he had innumerable brief bursts of poetic brilliance, and frequent passages of sustained and elaborate splendour. But, to many, the whole is spoiled by the want of nature, ease, and grace of movement. It is not a walk, not even a strut; it is a constant waddle, though its possessor be a swan.

This is much to be regretted; for in all the more important qualities of religious oratory his sermons will bear comparison with the best of this century. They are less elegant and refined than Hall's, but have a greater quantity and weight of thought in them, and their pictorial touches, if less delicate, show a ruder and sterner force. They are superior alike to Melville's and Croly's, in richness of evangelical sentiment, and in single felicities of language. They are far less diffuse, full of matter, and more classical than those of Chalmers; and if they are destitute of the prophetic fury, they want also the prophetic contortions, of Edward Irving. They are not to be compared to Foster's lectures, in piercing microscopic vision, in solemn sublimity, or in *composition* and continuity of style, but they display greater culture, and a far more sanguine and sunny temperament. With less of the artistic, they have more of the original, than Dr Harris's admirable productions, and with less subtlety, they have more sinewy strength. It was customary long to prefer the late Dr M'All of Manchester to Hamilton, till, in an unfortunate hour for the former, his sermons were published. There never was a more signal disappointment. Dr M'All had been the very idol of the Dissenters in the north of England. Chalmers, Hall, and Hamilton had to hide their heads before him, in the opinion of the multitudes of his admirers. And he was certainly a very superior man. Possessed of a striking presence, a brilliant eye, "ruddy and of a fair countenance," aware, too, of his personal appearance, and able and willing to manage it to the best advantage, with a deep, melodious, and commanding voice, highly cultured, thoroughly self-possessed, deeply pious, having passed, too, over the red-hot ploughshares of severe personal experience, M'All stood up before his audience as the finished pulpit artist, and the effects produced were correspondent to the powers and preparations of the speaker. He melted, enchained, detained, now thrilled, and now thunderstruck, his hearers at his pleasure, and, what was more wonderful, did so without ever uttering an original thought, or even an original image. It was a mighty cataract of "words, words, words," to which the people sat listening for long hours spellbound, and confounding the spell of mere oratorical sympathy with that of creative genius. Not one sentence was ever, or could be, or was worth being, remembered—not one individual was made wiser by the brilliant display, except, indeed, as men may be taught by the music of dumb waters, and by the cadences of dying winds. And not unfrequently did the hearers, after the sermon was over, start as from a dream, rub their eyes, and ask, in wonderment, "What has all this been about?"

"We clasp—what is it that we clasp?"

The sermons were published; and, certainly, more verbose, washy, and empty harangues have never been written by a man of talent; and we are safe to say, that there is more thinking and more poetry in one of Hamilton's pages than in M'All's entire volume. Of poetry, indeed, we should not speak; for, with prodigious flutter of faded verbiage, and of what was once commonplace fancy, there is not a gleam of real imagination from beginning to end.

What a pity that such disappointments are so common! In nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, posthumous sermons are failures, especially if the preachers have possessed a fine delivery; and those who publish them have well been, as a class, called "assassins of posthumous reputation, and sacrilegious traffickers in the memory of the

dead." When Dr Andrew Thomson of Edinburgh was drawing to the close of his last speech—it was on slavery—the burst with which it ends was so overpowering in its effect, that bearded men sprang from their seats, and cried wildly to the reporters, "Let it be taken down—let it be taken down—let not a word of it be lost." Had they been in their senses, they would have cried, "Let it *not* be taken down; let the impression alone remain upon our memories and hearts." For we doubt not that the next morning the newspaper report would disappoint them, in proportion to the fervour of their previous admiration. It is the same with almost all speeches or sermons which produce a very powerful immediate impression. Go and gather up a spent thunderbolt—go and gather up a shot star—as soon as try to collect again the scattered electricity of a great oratorical excitement.

Peculiarly happy is Dr Hamilton in his sermons, when describing natural or ideal scenery. Here his imagination comes into beautiful play. Witness his sermon entitled the "Heavenly Country," in his first volume. It is worthy of Jeremy Taylor. Indeed, all his allusions to heaven are fine. Some sermon-writers make it too shadowy and vague. Hamilton, in his sanctified sensuousness, revels in the material glories of the place—its bowers of bliss, its plains and valleys of ineffable loveliness, its streams and lakes of everlasting calm, its woods, where autumn never comes, its mountains, crowned not with snow, but with glory, its skies bright, and getting brighter every moment—we say sensuousness, as distinct from sensuality, for no two things can be more different than the dream of an unholy Mahomet, and that pure and lofty, although definite and warm, vision of the celestial world, which filled the soul of a holy Hamilton, and, we may add, of a still holier Bunyan.

Hamilton will appear to many, perhaps, over-orthodox and ultra-Calvinistic. But you are always sure where he is; his voice never utters an "uncertain sound;" you meet with no vague transcendentalism; no "paltering in a double sense;" no exhibition of Christianity gone a-mumming in the trappings, masks, and disguises of her adversaries: a stern fidelity to his own convictions is not less manifest than a wide charity and genuine catholicism. We have not read his lectures on "Future Rewards and Punishments," but believe, upon credible testimony, that his handling of that awful second part of the theme was as tender and delicate as his profound impressions of God's sovereignty and justice, and of the supreme authority of Scripture, would permit it to be. This is no time for arguing the doctrine of eternal punishment; we may merely here say, that a recent perusal of Leigh Hunt's Autobiography (which is filled with the subject) has convinced us, that, if *his* objections be taken as a specimen of those of the masses who at present oppose the orthodox belief on that point, they are about the most flagrantly one-sided, and intellectually contemptible, that ever crossed the mind of theological speculators. Alas! that a person of such fine genius and amiable temper as Hunt should have exhibited, at full length, and in the close of his days, his utter incompetence as a thinker and ignorance as a theologian, and travelled out of his proper field, apparently for the mere purpose of venting silly spite against doctrines which he does not understand!

WILLIAM ANDERSON, GLASGOW.

Amid our profusion of sketches, we have never yet permitted ourselves to draw a likeness of our venerable father, Samuel Gilfillan of Comrie. We feel at present a strong impulse to do so shortly; and we know Mr Anderson too well to doubt that he will stand aside gladly for a little, till we limn a yet dearer countenance than his,

and analyse a character equally upright and sincere.

Our father was indeed a very remarkable man. He was not, perhaps, what this fastidious age would call a man of genius, learning, or eloquence; but for genius he had a genial and impulsive heart—for learning, extensive information—for eloquence, unequalled ease of plain, effective address. His form was erect and manly—his brow lofty and marked—his eye quick to restlessness—his hair, as we remember it, tinged with grey—his whole aspect denoting the utmost activity of mind and ardour of character. Though naturally impetuous in his temper, and hasty in its expressions, he was one of the most delightful of companions. He was frank to excess—guile had been forgotten in his composition; he had a child-like gaiety and warmth of manner, from which he rose gently—not, like some, rebounded violently—into dignity; he was full of talk, and especially of anecdote and allusion, culled from a wide extent of miscellaneous reading; he had a knack, altogether his own, in bringing in his religious views, not like staring strangers, but like welcome and respected guests, into any company and any conversation. He was admirable, too, at adapting himself to all kinds of persons, and had one manner for the peasant, another for his brother-minister, a third for the literary man, a fourth for the religious and high-bred lady, and a fifth for the mere man of the world—yet all natural, easy, and ranking themselves gracefully under the one idiosyncrasy of his character. As a husband and parent, he was affectionate to indulgence. His beaming eye betrayed his deep love—his faltering tones in his Sabbath-evening addresses to the little circle—the warm pressure of his welcoming hand, when any of his family came home from the distant city—his all but last look to us as, a few days before his death, he met us returning from the village-library with a precious volume of "Plutarch's Lives" in our hand—his walks with us through the ripe corn-fields of autumn, pouring out the while a stream of information and interesting comment on the objects around—the hope and preference, but faintly disguised—even his occasional inequalities of temper, shall all be dear "while memory holds a seat on this distracted globe." As a preacher, he was plain, earnest, serious, always animated, sometimes vehement. All this is true of many preachers besides him; but few possessed the inexpressible charm, the *naïvété*, the exquisite power of adapting his discourse to every little incident which occurred in the history of his audience, to every smallest surge which took place in its stream. He stood up as a plain, honest, well-informed, warmhearted man, conversing on the level of his people, solemnly yet easily, about the matters of their eternity; and, as the conversation went on, allowing himself the widest range, now beseeching, now threatening, gathering illustrations from every remarkable aspect of the sky above, or any singular incident in his audience below—here quoting a verse of poetry which evidently occurred at the moment, there applying an anecdote from his multifarious stores, and here again snatching a shaft from the newspapers of the day, watching the while every countenance, and obliging every one to return the eager glance; and doing all this with such perfect mastery, and in such evident good faith, as to secure undivided attention, when he did not, as was often the case, awaken deeper emotions—the tears of penitence, the thrill of conviction, the spasm of remorse, the eager light, forming itself on the upturned countenance, of the "joy that is unspeakable and full of glory."

As a writer, he enjoyed more extensive and valuable popularity than perhaps any man in his own body. His works, consisting of papers printed in the "Christian Magazine," and occasional small volumes on religious subjects, were read from Maidenkirk to John o'Groat's,* welcomed in many a humble cottage as monthly messengers of gladness, and, besides passing through a multitude of impressions

* The late Hugh Miller, in his "School-days," makes a very gratifying reference to Leumas, whose compositions he and his uncle were wont to read with delight in Cromarty.

in this country, translated into French, Dutch, and Russ. Nor was their popularity to be wondered at, considering their unostentatious and pleasing merits. They were somewhat loosely and illogically composed, but so easy in their style, so lucid in their meaning, so short in their structure of sentence, so child-like and Bunyan-like in their tone, so evidently the effusions of an earnest spirit, and sprinkled so knackily with anecdote, and allusion, and verse, and bits of historic lore, all steeped in genuine gospel-savour, that we can at once account why readers of all classes and intellects perused them with pleasure and profit. They had no pretension to acute argumentation, or original imagery, or searching thought; but, full of gospel-marrow and affectionate earnestness, won their way to thousands of pious hearts, and lighted up a *lowe* of delight on many a cheek, bending at once over the ingle-*bleeze* and the pleasant page of *Leumas*. This was his favourite signature, consisting of the letters of his Christian name reversed.

His death we do well remember, and frequently roll over with melancholy pleasure. He had gone from Comrie to a country hamlet, on a *diet* (as those occasions were then called) of pastoral visitation. The good people had provided a basket of *sloes*, knowing his partiality for them. Of these he ate largely, and had scarcely reached home, till they affected his system in the shape of severe inflammation. This was on Wednesday, the 11th of October, 1826. All Thursday and Friday he was in violent anguish, absolutely shouting for pain, expecting immediate dissolution, and giving advices to his family with all the earnestness of a dying man. On Saturday, there was a delusive pause in the tragedy; his pain subsided, though the foundation of the disease was not reached; and he spent the day reading in bed. It was a quiet, grey autumn day, and we see him still, self-propped on his pillow, and with eager eye reading "Hervey's Letters," and the Bible. On Sabbath the 15th, the dark disease returned to his charge, and would now permit no farther delay. Severe was the struggle, dire the tossings, deep the groans, of this strong man caught in the embrace of one stronger than he. The medical men did their utmost. We remember seeing a basin of a father's blood, which they had drawn; we remember overhearing a consultation among them, the result of which was—they could *do no more;* we remember the sad silence with which they left the house; we remember the entrance of members of the family, who had been summoned from a distance to see him ere he died, coming in with red eyes to swell the general grief; we remember his last exclamation to his nearest earthly relative—"You will be a widow, and a poor widow!" and her look of calm, speechless sorrow, like that of one seeing from the shore a friend rushing down a remorseless rapid, and his answering glance, expressing, long after he could not speak, a deep interest in her he was leaving, as if even more than his wonted love were glowing in his eye; we remember the awful hush which reigned throughout the chamber till the presence of death was authentically proclaimed, and the wild sobs which burst out afterwards; we remember turning round from the death-bed, and looking with a sick and strange emotion to the golden autumn day, the stubble-fields, the lonely hills, the solemn silence of the Sabbath, which seemed to lie in sympathy without; we remember our first feelings, dreary and desolate beyond expression, on awakening the next morning, and finding ourselves *fatherless;* and a burst of wild grief at the coffining, which shook our young being to its foundations; and of turning round, in our agony, and gazing through a window northwards, and praying for and almost expecting to see his spirit appearing amid the still moonlight. We need not record how that tumultuous grief gradually subsided into a pensive recollection, seated in the heart as much as in the memory, of his dear image—an image which a thousand sunbeams, and showers, and shadows, and sorrows, and joys, have left uneffaced upon the soul. "It trembles, but it cannot pass away."

Samuel Gilfillan was a broad-minded,

kind-hearted, and thoroughly Christian being. To a greater extent than almost any contemporary in his own Church, he had forgotten points of distinction, and fastened on points of resemblance, between various bodies. Add to this, a love for literature, then, as now, rare among Scottish Dissenting ministers—a knowledge of many departments of the arts and sciences—an impetuous yet holy philanthropy—a generous, self-forgetting enthusiasm—a sympathy with the poor, the sick, and the forlorn—the principles of a "Whig and something more"—the head, heart, and life of a man and a Christian, and you have the outline of *Leumas*.

The parish kirk, near where he lies, is rather a striking object. It stands on a small knoll above the river Earn. It is a whitewashed structure, and its churchyard commands a noble prospect. This churchyard, however, would be greatly beautified by a circle of trees around it; for, although we do not greatly like the modern style of taste in burying-places—a taste transplanted from the country of Victor Hugo and Voltaire—a taste which has converted graveyards into gardens, sought in vain to disguise death and his horrors, and would allow Hervey, were he alive now, to carry on his "Meditations on a Flower-Garden" and on the "Tombs" in the same place, yet we do stand up for a diadem of trees as the crown of the departed, for a living company over the congregation of the dead, for a speaking as the guardians of a silent multitude—their very murmur in the wind, and the ever-renewing green of their spring garniture, preaching better than a thousand homilies the truth of resurrection, and returning to the question, "Shall these dead live?" an emphatic and everlasting "Yea." Would that Comrie Kirkyard had its synod of trees to whisper this over *his* dust, whose memory is still cherished amid those pastoral regions with an enthusiasm which is attested by the beaming eye and kindling countenance with which his name is uttered—of one who in all respects realised the poetical pictures of "the good minister"—of one to whom we feel in his sepulchre all the tenderness of filial affection, and all the reverence of profound esteem—of one who, "having turned many to righteousness, shall shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars, for ever and ever."

William Anderson, like the author of this sketch, was born and brought up under the roof and amid the influences of a quiet country Dissenting manse; with this difference, that his excellent father is still alive, and that we lost ours while yet a boy. In Kilsyth, under the shadow of the Campsie Hills, Mr Anderson first breathed the air of life.

Mr Anderson is a man who has many eccentricities, but all whose oddnesses are cognate with his nature, and do only slenderly disguise it. It is vain to object to the *queerness* of the attitude or action by which the strong man levels you to the dust. In such a case, the smile of laughter might contend with the grin of death. All Glasgow has felt and owned in William Anderson the presence of a strong, simple-minded, clear-visioned, and earnest man, at whom fools might laugh, but whom cold men wondered at, ardent men admired, and wise men understood.

The Germans were wont to say of Jean Paul Richter, that he was the *only one*. Among his class, connection, and contemporaries, William Anderson is the *only one*. He stands beside or collaterally—quietly, collectedly, and modestly himself. Nor is he a mere made original—a modern antique; he is one through whose mind all things and thoughts, as they pass, receive a distinct and peculiar tinge, just as light flowing through a painted window accomplishes the prophecy of the medium, and becomes something finer than itself.

William Anderson possesses the rare quality of power. If he does not *make*, nor seek to make, he *moves*, often without seeking to move. There is sometimes a stormy force about him, which seems superfluous whenever you witness the calm of his better and higher manner, which seems to fold around his audience as completely, irresistibly, and tenderly, as the sky over the mountains and the clouds. Artistic polish or beauty is not

often his, but there shines out not unfrequently a stranger and a rarer beauty, that of holiness, from his pages. Something of the sacred fervour, and boldness, and fierceness of the ancient Hebrew mind, breathes and burns about him. He has more of the vehemence of the Baptist than of the charity and mildness of the new dispensation, save ever and except when *children* are concerned. Then the old love, which shone in the eye of the Saviour as he said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not," sparkles in his; and lo! it is one weaned child discoursing to other weaned children, and from the mouths of babes and sucklings seeking to perfect praise.

When we speak of Anderson as having more of the old than of the new dispensation, we refer not so much to his views as to his spirit. His views are singularly wide and catholic, so far as the dark and disputed questions in theology are concerned. His heart, too, is warm and generous to a degree. But, somehow or other, whether owing to the intense purity of his nature, or to the fervour of his temperament, he has fallen at times into outrageous and violent extremes of abuse and invective against those unfortunate men who have been led astray by error or vice, particularly if they have published the results of their perverted powers, and has not unfrequently, instead of leaving them and their sins in the hands of their "Father and their God," burst across the limits of the world, anticipated their dooms, and sought to stir into fiercer energy the surge of Almighty vengeance. He loves, as Charles Lamb says of Southey, "to paint a given king in bliss, and a given chamberlain in torment, even to the eternising of a cast of the eye in the latter;" loves to stand by the burning lairs of Voltaire, Volney, Rousseau, Burns, and Byron, and interpret the wild Babel of their confused blasphemies and piercing lamentations. Now, this you might have expected in a fierce inquisitor, forgiven in the worn and desperate Dante, pitied in the narrow and stung Southey; but, in the robust, liberal, and kind-hearted William Anderson, you, or at least we, cannot account for, and cannot away with.

Let us grant, however, that, in thus dealing round damnation, he is quite impartial. Southey's "Vision of Judgment" is just a monstrous binding up of the "Court Calendar" with the Book of Life. Our hero does not go over the "Directory" of his city, and jot down his candidates for destruction or salvation, according to their streets or squares. He does not spare the rich transgressor for his wealth, nor the poor sinner for his poverty. Much as he adores genius, he will not permit its painted screen to stand, when it would shade the fierceness of the unquenchable fire—he hurls it down straightway. Since Edward Irving died, there has not been pouring from any pulpit such a stream of *purged perdition*. "It is fire and brimstone *from the Lord out of heaven*." Still we much prefer, what Mr Anderson also often distils upon his hearers, the soft-dropping dew of the Gospel Hermon.

In many points, Anderson bears a resemblance to Edward Irving. His rich scripturality of quotation, his antique cast of phraseology, his long unmeasured sentences, his personal appeals, his sudden short bursts of eloquence, his fearless and sometimes fierce spirit blended with much gentleness, his mixture of *cajolerie* and real simplicity, his occasional wildness, his sincere and burning enthusiasm, not to speak of his millennial views, render him a striking, though smaller, similitude of that "Shakspere of preachers"—that embodied flame of meteoric fire, who, like the wondrous tent or temple of electric light we saw lately suspended in the sky, hung, broadened, fluctuated, shivered, faded, went out in darkness—the pride, wonder, and terror of our ecclesiastical heavens.

One quality Mr Anderson possesses, the want of which in Irving was pernicious—we mean, strong manly common sense. An old divine was wont to say, that if you wanted learning—if you wanted even the grace of God—if you wanted anything else, in short, you might get it; but if you want common sense, you will never get it.

The most splendid endowments do not compensate for its want; the most extensive and bitter experience does not communicate it. This *pocket-map* of man Mr Anderson always carries about with him; and next to the inestimable divine chart, which no man values more, it has been his most valuable directory, and has saved him harmless where many have sunk to ruin, either been inflated and burst by vanity, or stiffened into salt statues of pride, or gone down the difficult places of semi-spiritual semi-sensual destruction. In reading Mr Anderson's works, and particularly his volume of sermons issued a few years ago, their main characteristic appears to be akin to this—vigorous, independent, yet cautious judgment. The volume contains in it, besides many artistic merits and literary beauties, some highly-finished passages, both of reasoning, of fancy, of sarcasm, and of practical appeal. There is, for example, a description of the hypocrite, which might have come from Foster's pen. Passages of similar power has he sprinkled throughout his "Good Works," on the "Duty of Loving God," on the "Evil of Sin," and on the "Re-union of Christian Friends in the Heavenly World." From this last, throughout a piece of fine fancy and feeling, we quote the following touch of real genius:—"Many a mother will not find her son in heaven, and yet the Saviour will make her happy; there can be no grief in the Paradise of God, no, not even for a perished son. She could not now endure him, and Christ will bring her some other woman's child, who has been seeking for his *mother* in vain, and he will say, 'Woman, behold thy son,' and to him, 'Behold thy mother,' and the wounds of the hearts of both will be healed." Nothing can be a simpler, yet nothing a finer, application of our Saviour's dying words.

We think, indeed, that, if Mr Anderson in his published works had been less of a controversialist, and more of an utterer of sweet, musical, and poetical thoughts, such as this we have now quoted, his fame as a writer had been greater than it is. How soon polemical writings die! No one seeks to preserve them, after a certain date, any more than to prop up a fallen thistle or thorn; but, let a flower or a hedge of roses begin to totter to its fall, every passing beggar will become its patron, and discover that there is in his heart some dim instinct of beauty unknown even to himself. Thus Clark's *à priori* argument (supposing its credit to fall) would fall amid utter silence, while an attack on the "Romeo and Juliet" of Shakspere would make unknown thousands eloquent. Many even of Protestants would mourn less the want of Chillingworth's work than that of some of the sublime hymns of the Catholic Litany, such as the *Dies Iræ;* and so we would cheerfully have wanted some of Mr Anderson's defences against those who thought him heterodox on the *points* of the "organ" and the "personal reign," rather than those numerous tender and beautiful passages which illustrate in an uncommon way points common to all Christians.

Mr Anderson, as a writer, is noted for nerve, contempt of conventionalities, and daring selection of all the words, thoughts, and images which will serve his purpose, culled be they from whatever quarter—from earth, air, sea, heaven, or that "other place." You occasionally find him *recollecting*, but never imitating, other writers. They are *in*, but not *on* and *over*, his eye. Strong and startling as he is sometimes in his expressions, he is seldom wrong in his conclusions. We hear of writers,

> "Ne'er so sure our favour to create,
> As when they tread the brink of all we hate."

Mr Anderson is one of this class. He drives his chariot along the brink of a whole chain of precipices, with a success as perfect as the way is perilous. He seems to love that border-land between truth and error. As you are about to call him an Arminian, he turns round and dashes a bit of Calvinism in your face; as you are about to charge him with leaning to "universal salvation," he so paints perdition, that you seem to hear the roar of its sleepless fires, and the tossing of the victims on the unmade beds of despair. He does not consider himself bound to reconcile apparently opposite truths, though

he is bound to believe both. *He* cannot cast a bridge between Ayr and Arran, but he knows that some god or giant yet may.

Mr Anderson, as a preacher, has a great variety of styles and manners. He can be, and is, either practical or profound—either minute or abstract—either too plain to be pleasant, or too rich and powerful to be plain—either calm or vehement—either commonplace or original. We assisted him lately, and were much interested in the whole services of the day. His congregation is very large, and is almost—thanks to him—the best *singing* congregation in Scotland. It was thrilling, almost to the sublime, to hear their morning psalm. His prayers were minute, comprehensive, and earnest; his sermon, though not in his highest vein, was interesting and forcible. But the most striking part was his table-service. During the consecration prayers, he holds the elements in his hand. While holding the cup, and praying for the coming of Christ—dark, solemn, swarthy as he stood—he reminded us of the "*King's* cup-bearer." The large assembly seemed eating and drinking consciously under the shadow of the coming chariot; and, if the morning psalm approached the sublime, the evening anthem, sung by the whole congregation standing, exceeded it, and rose to the sublime of dreams, when our vision of the night is heaven.

Mr Anderson's delivery does not add at all to the impression of his matter. It is rather slow and drawling; his accent and pronunciation are of Kilsyth in the last century; his tone is rather nasal, his gesture ungraceful. When he rises, however, into his true power, all this is forgotten in the animation, the forceful bursts, the impassioned truth, of a genuine natural orator. The air of eld, too, which breathes around his style, language, appearance, and address, adds a taut peculiarity to the whole, and you are carried back to the days of Cameron and Renwick. What a hill-preacher would he have made, as the enemy was coming up, or as a thunderstorm was darkening over the heads of the assembly!

As a public and platform man, William Anderson exerts great power in Glasgow. Every one believes him sincere, and every one knows him to be one of the ablest, readiest, and raciest of speakers. Here, too, all his strength, impetuosity, and earnestness, are under the control of discretion and sound judgment. His appearance is singular, if not fine. His features are plain, his face is slightly marked with the small-pox, his complexion is dark, but his eye, from its expression of blended sagacity and benevolence, redeems the whole. In private, he is homely, social, kindly, full of matter, especially of anecdote and incident illustrative of life and character—prone to praise than blame—and, with all his sagacity, simple as a child. Music and infancy are the two mild hobbies he loves to ride, and long may he ride them! Like many other men of mark, he has had to fight his way. He was long a wonder unto many. The foolish laughed at, the malignant defamed, the hypercritical underrated, him, and from his peers he received little sympathy or support. But, like all the brave, he struggled on, and was rewarded with victory. His popularity, at first excited by the eccentricities, was at last allowed calmly to rest on the excellence, of his preaching and character. "Those who came to laugh remained to pray," personal and party prejudice was gradually subdued, his oddities mellowed and softened with time; and we may now, as safely as we can conscientiously, declare, that the United Presbyterian Church, with all its host of talented men, possesses scarcely one who equals in genius, and very few who surpass in talent, plain, strong, gifted William Anderson.

We may just add, that Mr Anderson, although not distinguished for pastoral visitation, is most exemplary in waiting on the sick-bed. We heard recently a rather amusing anecdote of him. Some person called, complaining that he had been eighteen years a member of his congregation, and had never been visited by his minister. "You should be very thankful," replied Mr Anderson.—"How that, sir?" rejoined Mr B.—"I never visit any

but those into whose houses God has entered by affliction. It seems you have been eighteen years without affliction in your family; few are so highly privileged. I trust other eighteen years may elapse ere I be in your house, sir. Good morning, Mr B."

Note.—Mr Anderson has since issued a volume on "Regeneration," which is quite worthy of him.

JAMESON OF METHVEN.

MANY years have elapsed since we first saw and heard the venerable and gifted man whose character we are now about to sketch. It was at Stirling, we think, that we first heard him—at least, our first impression of his peculiar genius was received there. We well remember, on an autumnal Saturday evening, somewhere about the year 1825, being despatched into the room where he was alone, preparing for the labours of the morrow, with a candle! There he sat, in the half-darkened apartment, no notes or books beside him, but with a look of rapt contemplation, which, on our entrance, changed into a smile of the most perfect benignity, as he said, "Thank you, my dear boy." On the morrow, he preached from the words in Micah, "Feed thy people with thy rod, the flock of thine heritage, which dwell solitarily in the wood, in the midst of Carmel: let them feed in Bashan and Gilead, as in the days of old." We remember nothing of the discourse, except the lingering emphasis with which he repeated the words, "solitarily in the wood," which seemed to him unspeakably dear and suggestive, and our amazement and delight at the grotesqueness of his delivery, which certainly (we shall describe it by and by) was the *queerest* we ever witnessed. Afterwards we met him often, and heard him perhaps ten times; and all our interviews, and some of the sermons he preached, are as fresh in our memory as the events of yesterday. He admitted us, at Crieff, to the communion of the church; we preached for him the last Sabbath we had to spare ere our ordination, and enjoyed one of the most delightful evenings with him we ever spent; and we parted with him, in September, 1836, at the quay of Dundee —he on his way to the ordination of his son, as a missionary for Jamaica, in the highest spirits, with a smile (*the* smile, we should say, for it was unalterable) on his cheek, and a joke in his mouth; and in four months he was no more, having gone "the nearest way to the celestial gate."

We never met a man, taking him all in all, in native genius, in amiability, in humility, in untaught gentlemanhood, in warm and wide sympathies, in meekness, piety, and child-like simplicity, in holiness, and in charity, equal to Jameson. He reminded you of the "beloved disciple." You wondered that he was not translated. Indeed, his death at last seemed like a translation. He had been visiting a sick member of his church. On his return, repairing to his study, he sat down to write a letter, the purport of which was to request a favour for one of his flock from the M.P. of Perthshire. He had begun a word commencing with the letter *o*, when he sank down from his seat, and died. The members of his family, who had been waiting dinner for him, coming in, found him fallen as if he had deliberately lain down to sleep—a coal-scuttle near him not displaced, the fire-fender avoided, and *the* smile shining all radiant on his face, having defied and survived death. "Surely," said one of his children afterwards, "the angels had *straikit* him."

His own wish had been, we have heard, to die slowly, to taste the dark draught drop by drop, to "know all about death." But it was not granted him. His father, too, the Antiburgher minister of Kilwinning, had died in a moment. His son John was conducting family worship

When he ceased his prayer and opened his eyes, he found the old man away! Let those who ponder the last tremulous tracings of the hand of genius, or the last muttered accents of its touched lips, the "But" of Frederick Schlegel, or the "It is getting dark—you may go home, boys," of poor Adam of the High School, not forget the "o" of Jameson, nor fail to find in it an emblem of the yearning earnestness and pathetic poetry which were the essence of his nature.

A poet assuredly Jameson was, although he wrote very little verse, and that little was not worthy of his genius, nay, was singularly poor, and should never have seen the light of publication; but he was so thoroughly imaginative, that he could not preach a sermon or think a thought without rushing, or at least seeking to rush, into the poetical. The want of thorough culture and an extreme inequality of spirits often enfeebled his flights; but the natural motion of his mind was flying; his tendency was ever upwards, and his flights were often transcendent in ease, beauty, and power.

Speculative intellect he either entirely wanted, or, in reverence for the Word of God, had effectually curbed; consequently, we cannot call his genius one of that subtlest and most profound order which combines with, and includes, the philosophic element. Nor was his taste quite equal to his genius. He was the mere creature of heart and fancy. Not that his other powers were originally feeble—they were, on the contrary, strong—but they had not received the same cultivation, and had yielded without a struggle to the overbearing influence of his favourite faculties. He was essentially a painter, and the best passages in his sermons were graphic, bold, or tender pictures of incidents in Scripture history, in which he sometimes contented himself with filling up the outline of the story, but often, too, threw in strokes and figures entirely his own. He had a magnificent lecture on Christ's entering into Jerusalem, in which he describes those who had been miraculously healed running in the train of their deliverer, the dumb singing his praise, the lame leaping as a hart, and the risen dead loudest in the glad hosanna. It was the very thought of Haydon (whose celebrated picture, however, he had not seen), and he was pleased when told of the coincidence. We heard him once lecture for two hours on the "Gift of Tongues at Pentecost," in a succession of the finest pictures and illustrations, to which all his audience listened in rapt attention. He had a number of similar discourses on the Serpent in the Wilderness, the Flood, the Lily among Thorns, various incidents in the Acts, which, as they were never written fully out, are now irrecoverably lost. One sermon worthy of him is extant. It is entitled "True Fame," and was conceived in rather singular circumstances. Crossing, on the morning of the Monday of a sacrament, from Methven to the Broom of Dalreoch, he saw a woodman felling a tree. It reminded him of the words in the Psalm—"A man was famous according as he had lifted up axes upon the thick trees;" and straightway the sermon *came* upon his mind in a burst; the subject fell down before him like the tree before the axe; and, arrived, he mounted the pulpit, and preached it with great power. Soon afterwards the substance of it was printed in a collection of discourses by the ministers of his church, and has been much admired. A gentleman who heard it on its first delivery assured us that he never heard anything superior, and that it was even better in its preached than in its printed form. We shall give an extract from it ere we close.

No man, indeed, was more dependent upon moods and moments than Jameson. It became a proverb, that he was either the best or the worst of preachers. Nervous to a very extraordinary degree, fluctuating in spirits, extremely sensitive of the slights and coldness of a non-appreciating audience, intensely conscious of the defects of his delivery, and shrinking from every mode and occasion of display, he very often became the dullest, the most tiresome, the most unprogressive of preachers. He sometimes gaped, gasped, bungled, and repeated himself, till stran-

gers thought him an idiot, but *not* an inspired one. He required favourable circumstances to develop his powers, and some of these were singular enough. He liked a small audience of good plain Seceder materials; he loved better to preach on a week-day than on the Sabbath, chiefly because the hearers are then more fit and few; weather, private circumstances, and public events, all influenced his preaching; a striking anecdote, or even a harmless jest, recounted to him ere he mounted the pulpit, generally produced a good sermon; and if he failed in his first sermon from a text, in a sort of rebound of generous revenge at himself, the second was sure to be successful. His manner was certainly far from graceful. It was now slow and now violent, now drawling and now fierce. When depressed, he almost groaned; and when vehemently excited, he roared and yelled out his words of fire. And yet, whenever he rose to his true power, you felt, as in the case of all men of genius, that his manner gave a truer emphasis to his writing than the mere mellifluous and studied rhetoric of an actor could have given. His appearance neither added to nor detracted much from the effect. The figure was tall and slightly bent; his eye small and somewhat dull; his brow rather lofty than broad; the features coarse, but rendered amiable by the perpetual presence of a gentle smile, and interesting by a look of far-stretching and delighted contemplation. There was much in his face that resembled John Hunter's, the great anatomist. Like him, you saw a man dwelling in a world of his own, and occupied by some fine and original train of thought.

He was never, we have heard, half so eloquent as in his prayer-meetings and classes of young people. "Oh, that class," he said once; "I sometimes feel as if heaven were opening on me there." In such scenes he felt perfectly at ease, and spoke out of the abundant fulness of one of the warmest of hearts and most ingenuous of minds; and, as he spake, many hearts, we doubt not, burned within them with a fervour which shall survive life, and mingle congenially with the raptures of eternity.

And yet we must admit that he was far from being generally popular. A hundred anecdotes recur to us in proof. We have heard spruce cits of the east or west, overflowing the while with praises of some D.D. or other of their respective cities, speaking of him with contempt and pity: "Yes, a good but weak man; would never do in a town; what a different man is our wonderful Dr So-so!" This is almost a literal transcript of a sentence uttered by a worthy commercial traveller from Glasgow, who once drove us in his gig to Perth, as we were passing the village of Methven. At tent preachings, he was often left almost alone, preaching to the green grass and the summer flowers. But the most amusing case in point is a story he used to tell with glee himself. He was preaching one day, at great length, at the Broom of Dalreoch. A member of his family was to come to church at a certain hour to give away a child. When she reached the door, a countryman, who did not know her, was coming forth, slapping the door behind him in huge wrath. "Is the sermon done?" she inquired. "Dune!" he replied; "the havering ass, he'll no be dune the nicht!"

But, apart from *such* "havering asses," Jameson, in his better moods, had not a few admirers. Some plain but sensible people, in all congregations, hung upon his lips; the majority of his own charge adored him; and his brethren, with one accord, delighted to do him honour.

This latter fact proceeded not entirely from his pre-eminent genius, which might have bred envy in many of their minds, but from the perfect meekness, gentleness, and tenderness of his character, which was free, almost to a fault, and to a weakness, from those sterner and fiercer qualities which some honest men almost require for the thorough establishment of their independence and individuality, in a world so hollow and conventional as this. He was a man of peace, and, along with a powerful, discerning intellect, there was, as Carlyle says of a very different person, "a generous incredulity in his heart." He could hardly believe or speak ill of a human being; and this quality

served to colour unduly his estimate of inferior intellects—to induce him sometimes to praise the commonplaces of others above his own inimitable gems of genius, and to sit at the feet of men who were hardly fit to act as his amanuenses.

Indeed, around Jameson's mind there ever hung a fine floating atmosphere of enthusiasm, which magnified and beautified all he saw. Nature he loved to a passion. A friend of ours talks with delight of a grace uttered by him on the top of Ben Voirlich, 3300 feet above the level of the sea. Literature was very dear to him. His blood rose when he talked of Campbell's poetry or Scott's novels; and his cheek flushed a deep red, we remember, when we repeated to him Blake's Lines to a Tiger, which he had till then never heard. Himself the purest of men, he had yet a wide charity for offenders. In his "Letters," he calls Burns that "strange man Burns." He has not the heart to utter one harsh or angry word. For the nobler specimens of humanity, for children, for the young generally, for his brethren in the ministry, he overflowed with good wishes and unaffected warmth of love. And the same excess of kindliness was manifested in his religious views and feelings. If ever man idolised the very *letter* of the Bible, it was Jameson. He fancied that he had found all modern inventions anticipated in it. "Gas! What was the cloud of fire by night but gas? Think of a whole wilderness lighted up with gas!" The modern soiree was just the ancient love-feast revived. Nay, he did not despair of finding out the steam-engine in the Bible! And while this discovers a certain weakness, united to great strength, it is a weakness so characteristic and so harmless, that we cannot but say, Blessings on the kind-hearted Bibliolater!

And what has such a man done? What has he left to justify the praise which, in unison with the opinions of all who really knew him, we have thus sincerely bestowed? It is so little, although so fine and true, that we must draw largely upon whatever credit we may have acquired for speaking the truth, as we ask such of our readers as were strangers to his very name to accept our statements.

Many things prevented Jameson from doing justice to his powers, either in preaching or by the press. Eminently faithful in his pastoral calling, he was yet constitutionally indolent, and fond, we suspect, of reverie and day-dreams. Then he lacked ambition, or was in a position where it had never met with adequate nourishment. His habit of mental composition was somewhat pernicious to the compression and carefulness of his style. His culture was liberal, and his knowledge extensive, but he had never strictly trained or thoroughly furnished his mind. He became thus rather a child of genius—mutable, impulsive, uncertain—than a spiritual potentate ruling others through the power by which he had first mastered himself. Such causes, united to the non-appreciation of the general public—the "want of honour in his own country," common to prophets—prevented him from asserting and taking the place for which his gifts and graces had prefitted him—a place, we hesitate not to say, not far from that of Hall and Chalmers, although, like theirs, very considerably below that of Foster and Coleridge, the two mightiest Christian intellects of the nineteenth century in Britain.

Still, as no subject could he touch without beautifying it with a portion of the lustre of the wings of his dove-like genius, so he has left some fragmentary revelations of himself which are interesting, especially to those who can associate with them the look, and voice, and manner of the gifted and amiable man. His first and only separate production was a pamphlet, entitled, "Observations on the Present State of Theological Tuition in the United Secession Church"—a pamphlet containing the germ of a plan which has since, in part, been adopted. Previous to that period, the tuition of the students was committed to one professor; but afterwards two were appointed—Dr Dick, who (although he clipped the wings of Pollok, and treated with proper severity the silly *twaddling imitations* of imagination and fine writing which abounded in the ser-

mons of some of his aspiring students) was usually as just a critic as he was an able divine; and the amiable Dr Mitchell, who, next to the subject of our present sketch, approached nearer moral perfection than any clergyman we ever knew. And then (and greatly owing to Jameson's curious pamphlet, the first sentence of which was—"In England, it requires ten men to make a pin; in Scotland it requires only one man to make a minister, and hence it is that, in polish and point, a batch of Scottish parsons is so far inferior to a batch of English pins!") three others were added to their number.

"True Fame" we have already characterised. It is not a finished, but it is far better—a bold, striking, earnest, and original discourse. We extract the introduction:—"The scene of the 74th Psalm is Jerusalem lying in heaps; the poet, the child of holy inspiration, appears on the ruins, and, in notes of desolation and wo, strikes his harp to the fallen fortunes of his country. It was not that the pleasant land now lay waste, and it did lie waste; it was not that the daughters of Jerusalem were slain, and her streets ran red, and they did run red; but it was the temple, the temple of the Lord, with its altars, its sanctuary, its holy of holies, levelled to the ground, rubbish where beauty stood, ruin where strength was—its glory fled, its music ceased, its solemn assemblies no more, and its priesthood immolated, or carried far away. These had shed their glory over Israel, and over all the land; these, in their turn, were Israel's glory, and it was the destruction of these which gave its tone of wo to the heart of the Israelite indeed. In the verses succeeding our text, the prophet is about to represent the destruction of the temple; at that instant his imagination flies back to far-distant times, and, in the retreat, the bard, heart-throbbing, gathers strength, from the recollection of their prosperous and happier state, to pour a deeper swell of interest on the desolations which lay before him."

Such is a specimen of the style and spirit; but it ought to be read as a whole; and those who do this cannot fail, besides the general manliness and power, to notice here and there glimpses of deep insight. Thus, speaking of infidelity as it appeared after the Reformation, he says, "the bait was eagerly and widely caught by the *feeble* infancy of the rising science of Europe:" thereby expressing the true idea, that infidelity is the child of sciolism, and that more perfect knowledge may tend to bring men back to a child-like belief, and ultimate wonder again.

But by far the most characteristic and remarkable memorial of this good man is to be found in that little volume of letters published posthumously. These are chiefly addressed to afflicted friends, and are exquisitely adapted to instruct, as well as to console. Some of them, we hesitate not to say, are equal to any letters in the English language; nay, Cowper alone has equalled their *naïveté*, pathos, and occasional humour. Such sentences as the following abound in them. Speaking of a young girl, whom we remember well, who died suddenly, and in the very bloom of her early promise, he says:—"It seems she was at the class on Monday; how would her youthful spirit be surprised, ere Thursday, to find herself in a land of light and brilliancy, where she had only to open her eyes to read all knowledge, and to take her place among the accomplished spirits of the just made perfect!" Again, addressing the same amiable, but sorely-afflicted and bereaved father on the death of a lovely boy—the most beautiful boy we ever saw—he says:—"When death breaks in amongst our children, there is made a great gulf, and we, poor parents! can only look, and feel, and weep. The place well known amongst the rest is empty, the place at the table is empty, their place *in your prayers* is empty, and the face which met you at the door, with *all its little news*, meets you no more. Bitterness gathers on my heart, and I must stop." Hear once more this fine and strange burst:—"Ay, commend me to the resurrection of the dead! Why, here is a knot of old chaps—Noah, and Shem, and Abraham, and Jacob—met on a fine sunny morning at breakfast, all *canty*, and shaking hands at

the meeting for *auld langsyne*. Noah has quite forgot the terrible pother he was put into at the first roar of the breaking up of the fountains of the great deep; Abraham, the anguish he felt when he received the command to offer up his son Isaac; and Jacob—poor Jacob!—his tears over his lost Joseph are now all wiped away; all their misdeeds, honest men, for ever put out from the book of remembrance by the love, the precious blood of Him who has forgiven them all their trespasses. The loftiest imagination, in its finest hours, has not even touched the threshold of the happiness of such a group, with all the tenderness of the past, and all the brightness of the future, mingling in the newness, the safety, the joy, the triumph, and the assurance of the present."

Wordsworth asks concerning old Matthew, in the "Lyrical Ballads,"

> "Are these two lines of glittering gold
> All that must remain of thee?"

Alas! a few golden sentences, beautiful, and scattered as the light yellow clouds of a bright but broken evening sky, are all that must remain of the gifted John Jameson. Nevertheless he sleeps well, careless of the sneer of those beings who, before and after his death, called him *mad* (yes, he and all such *are*, and their asylum *is* heaven!)—uninjured, too, by the fearful earthquakes which are seeking to shake the simple-minded belief which (like the name of Calais on Queen Mary's heart) was written on *his*, and in the "sure and certain hope" of a blessed resurrection. He was taken away in time, for he was not a man either to brave, or to master, or to yield to the current of an age like this, where, on the one side, we find an earnest, fierce, and aggressive one-eyed Denial; on another, a half-belief seeking to drown its doubts amid the clatter of a well-organised machinery; on a third, an impudent dishonesty, which affects to deny the testimony of its own eyes, and cries out, "Peace, peace," when it knows full well that peace there is none; on a fourth, a vague eclecticism, which seeks to blend elements which are utterly unreconcilable, and would make Christianity only an "idea," and here and there a few (among whom now Jameson would probably have been numbered), who, sick of systematising, and refining, and compromising, and winking at plain and palpable facts, and of cowardly retreat into the past, are looking upward and forward to the hills and the heavens, and expecting new life to religion from its old source. But better for him, and perhaps also for us, that he lies quiet and calm near his dear wife, and some of his children, in the kirkyard of Methven; for, although one of the gentlest and most gifted of the taught at the feet of Jesus, he wanted many of the elements the world now demands from its teachers, from those whose voices would pierce with authority through the clamours of an age "when the nations are angry," and when, it may be, the time, too, of the "dead, that they may be judged," is drawing near.

We like to recall little traits and looks of the dear old man; his grey hairs—the benevolence struggling in every feature—the tenderness of his private tones—the loud energy with which he *sang* at family worship, especially when the sentiment was peculiarly poetic—his gentleness to his children—the funny stories he delighted to tell—the "hints to painters" he often gave in the course of conversation, sometimes ending in the wish, "If I had but the finger!"—his recital of his own experiences, adventures, and *dreams*—his generous bursts of admiration for books and men—are all carefully treasured in our heart, "to go no more out." And, when "sick of the present, we turn to the past," or, at least, feel that we have fallen among a race of little men, with little objects, little successes, *little* sorrows, and *little* sins, his image rises to our memory as that of one of the uncrowned princes and unappreciated moral giants among our kind.

Note.—Since this was written, we have prefaced a third edition of Jameson's "Remains," rendered valuable by two additional sermons, of much merit, from his pen, on the "Conversion of Paul."

NEALE AND BUNYAN.*

What is it, it has often been asked, which gives us the strongest and liveliest idea of the infinite? Is it the multitudinous ocean, or the abyss of stars, or the incomputable sand-grains upon the sea-shore? No: these, if not numerable by human arithmetic, are taken up by imagination as "but a little thing." She engulfs them easily, and continues to cry, "More, more;" "Give, give." We, of course, can only speak for ourselves, but certain it is that *our* liveliest notion of bottomless depth and boundless extent, is derived from our observation of the *infinity of human impudence*. That is a breadth without a bound, an elevation without a summit, a circumference without a centre, a length without a limit. We are perpetually, indeed, led to imagine that we are nearing its bottom, when lo! some new adventurous genius takes another plunge, and discovers a lower deep beyond the lowest, and we feel that the insolence, bigotry, and folly of a Neale leave all former absurdity floundering far behind.

This edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress" is unquestionably the most impudent book we ever read. In the infinite of impudence, its author has earned a place similar to that of Sir William Herschel in the universe of stars: like him, he has outstripped all competitors; his folly, like the other's genius, is of a ornamental magnitude, and becomes magnificent from its very originality and daring. Mr Neale has accomplished the poetical paradox: he has "gilded refined gold, painted the lily, and thrown a perfume on the violet." He has deliberately sat down to improve upon John Bunyan—to add and eke to the "Pilgrim's Progress;" he has converted honest John into a Puseyite, and changed his immortal allegory into a vademecum for the babes and sucklings of the Tractarian school. We advise him, when he has leisure, to carry out his plan as follows:—Let him proceed to make Milton, in his "Paradise Lost," teach passive obedience and non-resistance; let him, as a slight change, insert the syllable "in" before the title of Locke on "Toleration;" let him add a book to Cowper's "Task," advocating the damnation of unbaptised infants; let him show us Young, in his "Night Thoughts," defending transubstantiation; let him alter Don Juan to St Juan, and turn Byron into a devout Methodist; or let him re-write "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and show Eva, on her death-bed, converted to a belief in the divinity of the cart-whip and the auction-block! Not one of these would be a grosser insult to the respective author, or to the public, than is this miserable emasculation of Bunyan's allegory. Men who poison wells do so generally by night, and by stealth; but this poor creature sheds his small venom in open day, and raises a complacent cry over it, as if he had done some good and noble action! Next to the absurdity and positive impiety of the attempt he makes on the life of Bunyan's glorious book, is the silly and consequential insolence with which he avows and defends it.

We say "impiety," for whatever affects the integrity of one of the great classics of the world, especially if that classic be a religious book, amounts to impiety and sacrilege. What should we think of one who should thus practise on the Bible, who should intermeddle with the sublime argument of Job, so as to give it a different turn or termination; who should add his own moral to Jotham's fable; intermingle his own platitudes with Isaiah's divine minstrelsy; and annex his own appendix to the abrupt and crag-like close of Ezekiel's prophecy? We are far enough from placing John Bunyan or his work on the same level with the Scriptures. But his "Pilgrim" has long been to millions a minor Bible—a moon circulating round that elder orb. It has lain on the same shelf with the Scriptures,

* The Pilgrim's Progress of John Bunyan, for the Use of Children in the English Church. Edited by the Rev. J. M. Neale, M.A., Warden of Sackville College.

and truly been supposed to breathe the same spirit. Any attempt to underrate it, or to trifle with it, or to mangle and doctor it, is sure to be resented almost as keenly as an attempt to add to or diminish from the full and rounded glory of the Book of God.

Mr Neale does, indeed, begin his consummately foolish and impertinent preface, by confessing that he issues "the present edition of the 'Pilgrim's Progress' with some degree of anxiety"—a feeling which, we trust, on reflection, will be exchanged for a large measure of remorse and shame. He proceeds to answer, anticipatively, some objections to his unheard-of procedure; but, ere doing this, he takes care to inform us, that he "has nothing to say to those professing members of the English Church who would make the theology of Bunyan their own," and that "more than one English priest has, before now, honoured this, his great work, with a commentary." Honoured! A good idea! A country parson, never perhaps heard of beyond his own parish, or a glib city-lecturer, or a stolid, sleepy-headed bishop, honouring one of the holiest, truest, and most imaginative books in literature with a commentary! Let us next hear of the honour Caryl has conferred on Job, Todd on Milton, poor Taafe on Dante, and Rymer on Shakspere. The English churchman has yet to be born who can be compared, in native genius, in spiritual experience, and in profound piety, with the Baptist tinker, or who could, as from a height above, accord him honour. The highest honour the Rev. J. M. Neale could ever confer on him, he has conferred—namely, detraction and defilement; for, in value to a man of genius, next to the applause of a demigod, is the censure or the insolent patronage of a dunce.

There are, it seems, some well-meaning members of the English Church who "look upon the 'Pilgrim' as a religious classic, cannot bear the idea of its being pulled about!" and who ask, "Is its doctrine so very false? May not a child read it, without noticing the implied errors? Is not its general end and aim so excellent that minor defects may very well be forgiven?" But no! Mr Neale has some grave objections to Bunyan's theology. Although the "Pilgrim's Progress" is characterised by Coleridge—that zealous churchman—as the best system of divinity extant, it appears to Mr Neale to swarm with damnable heresies, and sins both of omission and commission. And what, pray, inquires the alarmed reader, *are* these? Has Bunyan denied the Trinity, or the divinity of Christ, or the atonement, or the necessity of divine grace? Has he questioned original sin, or justification by faith, or eternal punishment? No! but he is not perfectly orthodox, according to the Anglican standard, about baptism, confirmation, and the Lord's Supper! He does not believe that the Holy Ghost is given at baptism to every child; that it is renewed by the imposition of the bishop's hands at confirmation; and that the "blessed Eucharist is the chief means by which the life thus implanted, and thus strengthened, is supported and perfected." Bunyan—wicked man!—has said nothing about baptism or confirmation, and allows one of his most eminent pilgrims—Faithful, namely—to pass the house Beautiful without entering in! Moreover, the reader will find "the beginning of the Christian life set forth again and again as Conversion." Many other parts of the story and of the dialogue are exceedingly heterodox, and, to crown all, Bunyan has never heard of the Council of Chalcedon!

How, then, is Mr Neale to deal with this dangerous book, which lays so little stress upon outward observances, and so much upon inward change; which is so heinously charitable to those who cannot sit down with others at the Lord's table, so fond of repeating the paradox—"except a man be *converted*, and become as a little child, he shall in no wise enter the kingdom of heaven"—and which a great many excellent persons will not even "allow in their houses?" Shall he not put it at once into an Oxford Index Expurgatorius? or agitate for the entire suppression of all but its Sanscrit translation? or hire the thunders of the Vatican to

crush and quell it? Not he! He will act a more generous and liberal part. He will show himself to be a lover of literature and genius, and will sacrifice some of his very serious scruples of conscience to that love. *That* has been, indeed, so strong and discriminating, that it has enabled him to see very considerable merit in this heretical work. It certainly "exerts a fascination over the minds of children." Some of its "particular passages" are "beautiful;" one is "worthy (!!!) of St Bernard;" and therefore he is "thankful that such a book exists." And then, what a glorious plan he has for putting it all right, and turning the heterodox tinker into a St Bunyan. It is quite quick and magical. "Presto! begone the Baptist, and enter the Bishop." "One or two insertions, a few transpositions, and a good many omissions," and the thing is done. Suppose we should proceed, according to Mr Neale's principle, to operate on the Lord's Prayer, how easily we could prove it to be a prayer to the pope, ay, or to the devil! The printer who should omit the "not" in the seventh commandment, and insert it in the fourth, and should so transpose the ninth and the tenth verses of the 20th Exodus, as to enjoin men to rest six days and to labour one, would be but a type of thee, O! J. M. Neale, thou miserable ninny and bigot of the first magnitude!

He is a little sore, however, at the prospect of the ridicule he is rather sure he will meet. He anticipates that his undertaking will be compared to Bentley's edition of Milton. We can assure him that his fears on this point are quite unnecessary. Bentley's book is a "folly of the wise," and shows learning and talent which only the wise could either possess or pervert. Neale's book is the folly of one who, in Touchstone's language, is a "fool positive," and is quite characteristic of such an inverted genius. Bentley boldly conjectured what Milton *did* think, but did not write, and altered accordingly. Neale knows what Bunyan did not think, nor write, nor believe, and has made him say it, through the three grand magical operations of transposition, insertion, and omission. But what need we say, since "under that kind of ridicule he is to be perfectly easy!" We confess that we envy the stupidity which does not feel even less than the impudence which provokes, an expression of just and righteous scorn. But he adds, "if, as I believe, the work in its original state cannot safely be put into the hands of children, and if, as I also believe, in its present condition it can, I shall have done so good a deed for Christ's little ones, that I may well bear a laugh from those with whom literary merits atone for religious defects." As if all who laughed at him and his book were persons disposed to tolerate religious defects for literary merits; as if the "Pilgrim's Progress" were not valued by one large class less for its literary merits, than as a beautiful and life-like expression of evangelical truth—the creed of Calvin, illustrated by the genius of Shakspere—and as if that class were likely to approve of omissions, transpositions, and insertions, which extract the very pith and marrow of the book's belief! How Christ's little ones in the English Church may relish this edition we cannot tell; but we rather think that there are myriads of little ones in Britain and America who are quite able to resent the insertion of Neale's nonsense in their old favourite, and that, speaking of the public at large, a "dismal universal hiss" is likely to reward this new enactment of "Hamlet" with the part of Hamlet omitted by special desire.

"Yet" the author "cannot but add" a small depreciatory snarl at the book he is victimising. Its style, indeed, he "most firmly believes," is "on the whole a nervous specimen of pure homely Saxon;" but he is not "pledged" (who ever wished to pledge him?) to "admire every clause, or to think that not a word could be changed for the better." "Colloquialisms are not always ease, nor is vulgarity strength." Certainly not, any more than superstition is piety, or baptism regeneration, or a rabid attachment to forms real religion; but all genuine lovers of literature know that there *is* a charm even in the faults of great works, just as there is

in the record of the foibles and personal peculiarities of great men, and they would as soon in a portrait of Alexander omit the mention of his wry neck, or turn Napoleon and Suwarrow into grenadiers six feet high, as meddle with one characteristic vulgarism or grammatical slip in Bunyan or Shakspere. The man is as destitute of taste as of reverence, who stands beside a masterpiece of genius with a microscope in his hand, and employs his leisure in proving that the works of man are inferior to those of God, by discovering its invisible, or exaggerating its obvious, defects. To taste, indeed, Mr Neale does not pretend, but to reverence he does; and we ask him, in its name, how he would like the same treatment applied to those fathers and those mediæval writers he and his party admire so much, and whose inequalities and defects, in themselves far greater than those of the uneducated Bunyan, are not counterbalanced by a twentieth part of his merit?

But, unquestionably, the most curious paragraph in this refreshingly ridiculous preface, is the one that commences thus: —"There is yet one objection. The moral right of altering an author's works is denied to an editor. He wrote and published, it is said, what he believed the truth. To his own Master he has stood or has fallen. What you now teach, and teach in his name, he would have regarded as falsehood; it is dishonest to use his influence, his talents, his popularity, for the purpose of overthrowing his opinions."

This seems very sound reasoning. Indeed, Mr Neale, in personating, though only for a sentence, a man of sense, rises above himself, and reminds us of those actors who, though previously vulgar and stupid, seem to acquire gentility with the parts of the gentlemen, and wit with the parts of the clever characters, they represent. But mark how he answers it! "A reasonable defence is found in the following consideration:—The author, whose works are altered, wished, it is to be assumed, to teach the truth. In the editor's judgment, the alterations have tended to the more complete setting forth that truth,—that is, to the better accomplishment of the author's design. If the editor's views of the truth, then, are correct, he is justified in what he does; if they are false, he is to be blamed for originally holding them, but cannot be called dishonest for making his author speak what he believes that, with more knowledge, the author would have said."

It has been our fate to read with complicated emotions of pain, pity, and weariness, thousands of senseless or impertinent paragraphs. But we doubt whether, on the whole, we ever encountered such a master-stroke of absurdity and impudence as the above. It rises to the sublime. By boldly plunging into the bathos, Mr Neale finds the Alps of the Antipodes.

The thing is such an extraordinary specimen of its class, as to demand rather a minute dissection. The fungus is so filthy, and for a fungus so vast, that we must deal with it as a whole. "The author," he says, "whose works are altered, wished, it may be assumed, to teach the truth." Certainly; but did that truth, in his view, include the semi-papal notions of Mr Neale? Was not John Bunyan, with all his catholicity, a decided Baptist and Dissenter? "In the editor's judgment," the alterations he has made may indeed "tend to the more complete setting forth of that truth;" but would they in the *author's* judgment? This is the question. Now it is clear that John Bunyan, if retaining his former sentiments, could not approve of Mr N.'s tinkering. And who has told our Oxford seer that Bunyan has changed them? He may; but we pause, and shall pause long enough, for the evidence. "If the editor's views of the truth are correct, he is justified in what he does." Stop a moment, Mr Neale! Suppose you were what you are not, a sage wiser than Socrates, or a prophet as profoundly inspired as Isaiah, would that give you any right to intermeddle with the conscientious convictions even of a child, or to cut and carve on the poorest book which earnestness ever issued to the world? You have just as good a right to steal a man's purse, or to mangle his person, as to mutilate, after such a fashion, his book. "If they are

false, he is to be blamed for originally holding them; but cannot be called dishonest for making his author speak what he believes that, with more knowledge, the author would have said." As to Mr Neale's original views of confirmation—and we care for this just as little as the general public—*his* holding them at least can add nothing to the weight or value of their evidence. But neither we nor the public will endure that they shall be put into the mouth of John Bunyan, and even seek to share in the immortality of the *chef-d'œuvre* of his genius. We feel "jealous with a godly jealousy" over that book; and, without accusing Mr Neale of dishonesty in this abortive attempt, we do accuse him of ignorance of the public feeling and taste, of gross misappreciation of his author, of cool impertinence, warm bigotry, and of a stupidity as dense as it is unconscious. *He*, forsooth, "believes that, with more knowledge, Bunyan would have said" the same with himself! How easy it were for hundreds to make a similar statement! We are certain that, while J. M. Neale and Henry of Exeter humbly think that, with *their* light, Bunyan would have now been a High Churchman, Carlyle imagines that he would have been a Sartorist; Parker, that he would have been a pilgrim on that wretched path of "Christianity without facts"—a path which is recognised neither by heaven nor hell; Dr Candlish, that he would have been a devoted friend of the Free Church; Macaulay, that he would have been, like himself, on religious matters, a nothing-at-all; and more reasonably the Milton Club, that he would have been an honorary member with them. How this age might have altered the mould and shaped the fashion of a mind like Bunyan's, it is hard to conjecture; but we rather surmise that Puseyism would have been his last resort, and that at all events he would now say, were the apparition of *this* edition of the "Pilgrim's Progress" to flash on his view, "Scott I know, Montgomery and Cheever I know, but, Neale, who art thou?"

We have said more than enough of this work and its author, and shall forbear to enlarge on the manner in which he has executed its intolerable design. Suffice it that he has dug a well before the wicket-gate—kicked Sinai out of his road—spirited old Worldly Wiseman away—altered the situation of the cross—given Christian *two* burdens, &c. &c. &c.—in short, written himself down an ass, in characters so large and legible, that Dogberry himself might read them as he ran.

Apologising to our readers for dwelling thus long on such a production—and our only apology is the unique magnitude of the impertinence, and the light it casts on the notions and feelings of a large ecclesiastical party, who have it in their heart to treat all the great protesting literature of the past, including the Bible itself, as one of their smallest creatures has treated the "Pilgrim's Progress"—we propose to spend the short remainder of this paper in examining a question which springs naturally out of its subject, and which is of considerable practical importance. It is this: What is the legitimate province and prerogative of an editor, in re-issuing classical and standard works? What are the conditions and proper limits of the power which he assumes, or which is conceded to him, over his subject authors?

There are difficulties connected with these questions, and perhaps the following remarks may not be sufficient to obviate them all. We must, however, state them:—An editor, then, of course, is bound to preserve with extreme solicitude the text of his author, exactly as that author left it. He is not, like Bentley, to exercise his ingenuity in finding out new readings, which, in his judgment, are improvements. There were no end to such a system, were it once begun, and its injustice to the author is obvious. Indeed, we value Bentley's edition of Milton as being the *reductio ad absurdum* of the system commentators have so often adopted, of cutting and carving, glossing and annotating, upon the great writers of the past. It is ridiculous to see the airs of superiority assumed by some of these wiseacres, while dealing with the works of men infinitely superior to themselves.

How charily they praise the most marked and striking beauties! How dignified their rebuke! How condescending their patronage! How they ransack the stores of their learning to prove their author a splendid plagiarist, and what an edifying contempt do they discover for all who have gone before them in the same trade of small word-catching and detection of petty larceny! We bid any one who doubts the accuracy of this description to turn to Todd's edition of Milton—otherwise a most praiseworthy book—and glance at the notes of the editor, Hurd, Dyce, Warton, and twenty more, jostling against each other at the foot of the page, till almost every thought and image is traced to other writers, often on the most contemptibly small evidence, and till the text appears literally smothered under the weight of the conjectures, quotations, misplaced learning, and irrelevant discussions of the well-meaning, but wofully-misemployed, commentators.

In all our classics, there occur passages unworthy of their genius, either from their weakness or their wickedness. Now, what are editors to do with these? Some will say that they are not responsible for them, and should therefore print them as they are, perhaps under an accompanying protest. This, we think, however, springs from a false and mechanical notion of what an editor is. His office is not that of a mere printer or amanuensis. We suppose him accepting the task voluntarily, and discharging it as a guardian alike of his author's fame and of his own character. We have admitted above, that there is a certain charm connected with even the faults of good writers, but this is true only when these are intermixed with beauties. There are, on the other hand, pieces entirely and disgracefully bad as literary compositions; and why should such big blots be stereotyped, especially if they are such as cast no peculiar light upon the author's idiosyncrasy, nor mark definitely any stage either in the process or the decline of his mind? An honest editor (if the plan of his publication at all permit) will silently drop such productions from the list.

But his path becomes far more clear in reference to those writings in which vice or infidelity is openly and offensively exhibited. Here his moral sense and religious feelings unite with his literary taste in demanding the use of the knife. What man, that regards his own character, would edit some of those beastly miscellanies in verse by which Swift has disgraced his talents, and pushed himself almost beyond the pale of humanity, or the Merry Muses of poor Burns, or the blind and raving blasphemies of "Queen Mab?" Such things, it may be said, are valuable as illustrating peculiar traits in eminent characters, or certain stages in their moral history, and should, therefore, be preserved. Well, be it so; only let *us* be exempted from the sordid and disgusting task of storing them up in those moral museums where alone such detestable abortions are in place, or can hope to remain for ever. The true editor will not shrink from coarseness, but he will from corruption. He will distinguish between faults which are characteristic of an age, and wilful insults to good feeling, or cold, settled attempts to sap the principles of morality, as well as between the language of doubt and darkness, and that of aggressive and insolent blasphemy. There is at present a rage of genius-worship which would go the length of preserving the very foam of its frenzy, and the very slime of its sin; and there are those who insist that productions which the men themselves regretted and sought to suppress in their lifetime, and on which, now, it may be, they look back with shame and horror, shall be bound up in the bundle of their better and imperishable works. These people are constantly prating of the earnestness of Shelley, for example, and asking—should even the *mistaken* effusions of such a man be withheld from the world? We say, Yes, if they are rather the ravings of Philip drunk, than the sincere outpourings of Philip sober; if, moreover, they are calculated not only to evince, but to circulate, mental inebriety, and if, not satisfied with expressing his faith, they grossly misrepresent, foully belie, and fiercely insult

the faith of the Christian world. We are far, indeed, from advocating state prosecutions for blasphemy: we think them machines of unjust power, at once cruel and clumsy; nor will *we* be suspected of undue straitlacedness or of bigotry at all; but we would have public opinion brought to bear, with all its weight, upon the subject. We would seek to crush such unworthy memorials of genius under the silence of universal contempt or pity. We do not wish them mutilated nor extinguished; we wish them preserved; but preserved, as other monstrosities are preserved, in secluded corners, on lofty shelves, for the contemplation of those in whom curiosity overpowers disgust, and who can wring a lesson and a moral even from things abominable and unutterable. We are irresistibly reminded of the lines of Milton in his "Battle of the Angels:"—

"I might relate of thousands, and their names
Eternise here on earth; but those elect
Angels, contented with their fame in heaven,
Seek not the praise of men: The other sort,
In might though wondrous, and in acts of war,
Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
Cancell'd from heaven, and sacred memory,
Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.
For strength from truth divided, and from just.
Illaudable, nought merits but dispraise
And ignominy; yet to glory aspires
Vainglorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
Therefore eternal silence be their doom."

DR CHALMERS.

FIRST SITTING.

We have somewhere heard the indolence of true genius deplored. But certainly the charge does not apply to men of genius in our day. In an age distinguished above all others for fervid excitement and unrelaxing energy, it was to be expected that the brighter and loftier spirits should share in the general activity. And so verily it is. There is scarcely such a being now-a-days as your sluggish and slumbering *litterateur*, reposing under the potty shadow of his laurels, dreaming of immortality, and soothing his soul with the pleasing idea that, because he is the stare of a coterie, he is the "observed of all observers;" and that everybody else is as intensely conscious of his minute merits as a happy vanity has rendered himself. Nor are there, on the other hand, many specimens now-a-days of a still sadder species of illusion — a man of fancied genius, dividing his days between the study and the tavern, enacting the part of Savage and Dermody, without a ray of their talent. This disgusting kind of absurdity is dead and buried. Genius, in our time, is up and doing, "working while it is day." The most vigorous are now also the most active, and, may we not say, the most virtuous, of minds.

And were we to name one quality, amid the assemblage of peculiarities which distinguished the subject of this sketch, as more than another his, it would be that of activity: of restless, burning, unappeasable activity. Some necessity of action seemed laid upon him. Some invisible scourge seemed suspended over his head, urging him onwards. This quality was as strong on him when the grey hairs of age, like a crown of glory, gathered round his head, as it was in his fiery youth. "A great river, in its ordinary state, is equal to a small one when swollen into a torrent." So the aged and ordinary state of Dr Chalmers's feelings was equal to the extremes, the paroxysms, the juvenile raptures of less energetic minds. What others shrink from as the very brink of insanity, was his starting-point—the first step of his aspiring spirit.

We heard him once addressing an audience of two thousand persons. The audience was exciting, and we saw from the

first that he was to be sucked into the maelstrom of his passion sooner than was ordinary with him. Generally he rose by distinct and gradual stages into the full swell of his power; but in the present case, after a few introductory remarks, he rushed at once into his most rapid and fervid manner. Ere the middle of his two-hours' speech, he had reached a climax whence to rise seemed hopeless. Like an eagle who has reached his highest limit, and who remits and lowers his strong flight, so he consented to let himself down to a less giddy elevation, to dally with, if not to slur over, his subject. A yawn began to spread through the audience. There were ominous revertings to the door; watches, so appalling to orators, were beginning to appear; and there were fearful whispers, with "dry lips," "When will he close?" And soon it became apparent that he was closing; he suddenly struck again his former high key-note; he quoted the lines of Burns, "From scenes like these old Scotia's grandeur springs," &c. It was answered by a burst of applause. He replied by a ten-minutes' torrent of the most brilliant eloquence, and sat down amid thunders of acclamations. The triumph of the orator was complete.

Dr Chalmers found his level, and it was one equally removed from the over-estimates of partial friends, and the depreciation of party — he had no personal foes. A great thinker, enkindling original thought into eloquence, he can hardly be called. To Burke he has been often compared, though we could never well understand why. The only point of resemblance we can perceive between the two, is a certain hurrying, impetuous motion of style, which denotes the extreme degree of possible excitement; which reveals in both the contortions of the sybil along with the inspiration. We notice this particularly in Burke's later and Chalmers's earlier works. In their fierce pages, the very connecting particles—the very "ands"—seem inspired and enkindled by the surrounding fury. But, bating this similarity, which is one rather of temperament than of genius, no two intellects can be more different than those of Burke and Chalmers. The great *forte* of Chalmers is immediate impression. Burke's speeches were, we know, generally delivered to empty benches. Chalmers's intellect is spacious and lofty, but, in everything like depth and comprehensiveness, inferior to Burke's. Chalmers's fancy is bold; but in its colours there is a sameness as well as splendour. Those of Burke are varied and brilliant as the hues of nature; his "imperial imagination" has brought the universe within its range. Of almost all styles, that of Chalmers is the most tinctured with mannerism. Burke's is much more diversified; it wanders at will, like the wind which bloweth where it listeth, now uttering sounds of deepest fervour, and now of tenderest beauty. It is, like Shakspere's, a style not to be anticipated, which changes upon you evermore, uncertain and unexpected. In the course of Chalmers's writings, there are many passages over which you hang and pause, in breathless admiration; but there are few striking things, few compact and aphoristic sentences, at which you start, which fix themselves down upon your memory, and which, once heard, are never forgotten. What you do carry away is generally a forcible alliteration. It is, on the other hand, the charm of Edmund Burke, that his winged words are heavy with golden ideas, that he scatters sentences of the most memorable character and precious wort.., embodying in them lessons of profound and practical wisdom, amid the rushing whirlwind of his eloquence. Chalmers writes a barbarous and Babylonish diction, redeemed by great energy, and steeped in genuine enthusiasm, and set off with rugged ornaments. Burke's style is English, or, if ever he coins new words, or makes new combinations, it is because the resources of the language are sometimes all unequal to the double demand of his understanding and his genius.

While admitting Chalmers to be the most powerful Christian orator (Irving excepted) our country has produced for two centuries, we must place him, as a writer, in the second rank, alike of past and present preachers. When you com-

pare his style with Barrow's, you are ashamed to think that, in the course of two hundred years, the language seems so to have retrograded; the contrast is so great between the true taste, the copiousness, and the power of at once cutting the most delicate discriminations, and catching the freshest colours, which belongs to the diction of the one, and the comparative coarseness, scantiness, and mannerism of the other. When you compare his imagination with Jeremy Taylor's, you become sensible of the difference between a strong, but bounded, and an inexhaustible faculty. When you put his discourses as wholes beside those of Horsley in their manly vigour, they seem imperfect, spasmodic, and monotonous. As a thinker, he is, compared to Foster, backneyed, and to Isaac Taylor, timorous. But as an orator, hurried away himself by a demoniac energy, his faculties and his heart alike subservient to, and swimming in, a current of ungovernable eloquence; and with the power of conveying entire to others his most peculiar emotions, and of breathing out upon them, as from snorting nostrils, his contagious fire; not only does he stand alone in this age, but we question if in any period, in this single quality, his equal has appeared. Demosthenes, everybody knows, had immense energy, but his Δεινοτης had rarely the rushing fluency we mean to ascribe to Chalmers. Cicero is ornate and elaborate; he is a river cut through an artificial bed, rather than a mountain torrent. Jeremy Taylor's stream meanders, "gliding at its own sweet will," rather than sweeps right onward to the sea of its object. Barrow, to vary the figure, takes sometimes the gallop in grand style, but his eye never gets red in the race, nor do his nostrils breathe fire or spring blood. Howe makes every now and then a noble leap, and then subsides into a quiet and deliberate pace. Burke is next Chalmers in this quality. Curran, Grattan, Sheil, and Phillips, frequently exhibit this rapid and involuntary movement of mind and style; but it is marred in the first by diffusion; in the two next by a certain irregular and starting motion, springing from their continual antithesis; and in the last by the enormous degree in which he possesses his country's diseases, of intellectual incontinence and *plethora verborum*. Hall occasionally rises to this style, as in the close of his Sermon on the Threatened Invasion; but is too fastidious and careful of minute elegancies to sustain it long or reach it often. Irving shines in brief and passionate bursts, but never indulges in long and strong sweeps through the gulfs of ether. But with Chalmers such perilous movement is a mere necessity of his mind: his works read like one long sentence; a unique enthusiasm inspirits with one deep glow all his sermons, and all his volumes; and so far from needing to lash or sting himself into this rapid rate, he must pursue a break-neck pace, or come to a full stop. Animation is a poor word for describing either his style or manner. Excitement, convulsion, are fit, yet feeble terms for his appearance, either at the desk or the pulpit. And yet, what painter has ever ventured to draw him preaching? And hence the dulness and paltriness of almost all the prints (we except Duncan's admirable portrait); they show the sybil off the stool; the eye dim and meaningless, not shot with excitement, and glaring at vacancy; the lion sleeping, not the mane-shaking, tail-tossing, and sand-spurning lord of the desert. In repose, neither his face nor form are much better than an unstrung bow or an unlighted lustre.

After all that Chalmers has written, the "Astronomical Discourses" are, as we have stated already, in our opinion, his best and greatest work. They owe not a little, it is true, to their subject—Astronomy, that "star-eyed science" which, of all others, most denotes the grandeur of our destiny, and plumes our wing for the researches and the flights of unembodied existence; which, even in its infancy, has set a crown upon the head of man—worthy of an angelic brow—a crown of stars; and has opened up a field so vast and magnificent, that it was impossible for a mind like that of Dr Chalmers altogether to fail in its exposition. And, so far as the Newtonian astronomy goes, the poetry,

as the religion of the sky, never found before such a worthy and enthusiastic expounder. Kindling his soul at those "street-lamps in the city of God," he descants upon creation in a style of glowing and unaffected ardour. He sets the "Principia" to music. He leaves earth behind him, and now drifts across the red light of Mars; now rests his foot upon the bright bosom of Sirius; now bespeaks the wild comet; and now rushes in to spike the guns of that battery against the Bible, which the bold hands of sceptical speculators have planted upon the stars.

Hazlitt has recorded, with much gusto, his first perusal of Chalmers's enchanting volume, under an apple-tree in the garden at Boxhill. We shall not soon forget the time and circumstances in which we first read it, in the solitude of a mountainous country, and at the age of fifteen. Fontenelle had previously taught us the doctrine of a plurality of worlds; but Chalmers drew first fully the curtain from the glories of the creation, and showed our young soul some of the secrets of that abyss which is foaming with worlds. We felt lifted up on his style, as on wings, into those regions "calm, of mild and serene air, where burn the innumerous and eternal stars." We learned, speaking it reverently, to take up earth and all its isles as a "very little thing." Such was the effect of the perusal of the first sermon of the series. But, stranger still it was, how those that followed brought back our thoughts and affections to this "dim spot which men call earth," seemed to invest it and its reptile race with a new and awful importance; and how the orator, by his "so potent art," made the very stars, in their courses, attest the dignity and set their seal to the hopes of man.

It is worth while recording even such boyish impressions, if they be of that profound and permanent cast which colour after-life; and perhaps one of the most memorable moments in every man's existence is that in which, by whatever hand, the veil of the universe is withdrawn, and the true starry scheme is seen in its unmeasured proportions, and unutterable grandeur. What though the heavens thus seem to "go farther off?" What though the poet laments that childhood's "lovely visions" yield their place to "cold material laws?" Such laws may be material, but they are not cold. They are not dead and sullen principles. They are warm as the light of the orbs which they regulate; they are living as the inhabitants, if such there be, of the worlds which roll in their sway. It *is* a proud and lofty moment when the imagination first launches away into that great ocean, every wave in which is a world! And we shall cherish its memory for ever.

We were not then aware that the logic of these sermons was principally derived from a book entitled the "Gospel its own Witness," by Andrew Fuller; nor do we even now lay much stress upon the circumstance; for so may the full and golden train be traced to the bare and cold seed-corn—the crowned oak to the acorn! Andrew Fuller, a cold, acute, clear-headed man, perhaps made out the logic of the thing; but who supplied the imagination, the passion, the overpowering declamation, all the qualities, in short, which made the book what it is? They came—whence could they have come, but from the blood and brain of Chalmers? A similar cry of plagiarism has assailed such names as Shakspere, Milton, Coleridge, Scott, Byron, and Mirabeau. Shakspere found, forsooth, his plots in Cynthio's novels, and the skeleton of some of his speeches in Plutarch; but where found he his sentiment, his imagery, his language, the flesh and blood with which he clothed those dead bones, and the magic of the word of genius by which he made them living men? Milton drew, sometimes, out of other men's wells with a golden pitcher, which consecrated and hallowed whatever he drew. Coleridge, in momentary hallucination, copied down some pages of mystic metaphysics from Schelling; but whence deduced he "Christabel," whence "Kubla Khan," whence aught but the mere germinal idea of the "Anciente Marinere?" To what fountain are we to trace the river of his

matchless talk? And from whom did he borrow the tarn of his mysterious eye, or the "rich thunder of his voice?" Scott, too, borrowed, from black-letter, everything—except his style, his spirit, his sympathies, and his genius. Byron caught up, from the crowd, certain fine floating thoughts, and set them to the proud music of his own song, even as Apollo might be supposed to set earthly tunes to his celestial lyre, or to place arrows cut from the woods of Delphi upon his own golden bow; but who lent the "Pythian of the age," "Cain," or the "Corsair," or the "Giaour," or "Don Juan," or those little pieces which are like audible beatings of his own heart? Mirabeau submitted to be primed and loaded by others; but were they the less pigmies, and he a giant? Whether is he the author of the flame, who lays down the fuel, or who applies the torch? Is an orator the less eloquent because he uses common words—a writer the less powerful because he employs the alphabet—or a warrior the less brave who, in a mortal struggle, snatches a dagger from a common soldier, and wields it with his own strong arm? Dumont supplied Mirabeau with sentiments and speeches; did he give him his black boar's head, his stamp of power, the energy of his gesticulation, the lightning of his eye, his short and passionate sentences, "winged with wrath?" Did he stand by him on his death-bed, prompting him with those sublime and terrible bursts which told that a "gigantic Heathen and Titan was stumbling down, undismayed, to his rest?"

His subordinate works—his "Evidences," his "Tron Church," and "St John's," and "Occasional Discourses," &c. &c. &c.—are all marked by the same peculiarities: the prominence of one idea, round which cluster and gravitate a thousand lesser particles of illustration and image; incessant and furious movement, without progress; a trick of confronting opposite ideas so pertinaciously, that they seem ashamed of looking so long in each other's faces; an emphasis, given frequently, as by the intonations of madness, to common truths; a lavish supply of loose and dissonant diction; a perpetual and systematic appeal to the "artful aid of alliteration;" a melody in the general result of the style, strangely co-existing with barbarous discord in its particular parts; sentences of breathless movement and portentous length, rolling and revolving systematically, as if their motion were balanced between the centripetal and centrifugal forces; a riveting interest, which drags you after him, go wherever he will; and an air of frank, fearless earnestness, which secures to his writings the charm and expression of "a bright-eyed face that laughs out openly."

Among his separate single sermons, we prefer that "On Cruelty to Animals," as the purest in style, and the most elevated in sentiment. One sentence from it, of perfect beauty, has lingered in our memory—"The lioness, robbed of her whelps, makes the wilderness to ring aloud with the proclamation of her wrongs; and the bird, whose little household has been stolen, fills and saddens all the grove with melodies of deepest pathos." Such sentences, so simple and so memorable, are, it must be confessed, rare in his writings.

From the questions connected with his political and church career, we must abstain. His great fault has ever been, that his brain has been a caravansera of crotchets. Indeed, considering the ready welcome he has given to each new intellectual guest, our wonder is, that his course has not been much more erratic, capricious, and inconsistent.

It can hardly be necessary to do more than allude to the events of his life, or to the manner of his public speaking. He was born in Anstruther, Fife, and educated at St Andrews, where he distinguished himself much in the mathematical and chemical classes. When licensed to preach the gospel, he was settled in the parish of Kilmeny, the kirk of which stands so picturesquely among its embosoming woods, and by its still, rural burying-place. There, for many years, he is said to have paid more attention to his philosophical studies than to his flock. A story is yet current in Fife, that he was one Sabbath, during the in-

terval of the service, botanising in the woods, when the bells rung for church. Huddling on his hat, full of specimens, earth, &c., he ran to the pulpit; but, as he went up the stair, imprudently took it off, and the grasses and flowers tumbling about his ears, betrayed the secret of his unclerical pursuits to his gaping congregation. Some time ere leaving Kilmeny, a remarkable change took place in his character and deportment. Partly through the circumstance of being requested to write on the "Evidences of Christianity," for the "Edinburgh Encyclopædia," his mind was deeply and permanently impressed with a sense of religion. He felt that his preaching had hitherto been a "sham." With characteristic determination, he altered it from its foundation. Ceasing to be an "Ape of Epictetus," he became, for the first time, a preacher of Christ crucified. The consequence was, that his popularity not only increased in the district, but far cities began to hear of his fame.

After having preached a number of overwhelming public sermons in Dundee, Edinburgh, Glasgow, &c., he was translated to the Tron Church in the last-named city. Here he was attended by great crowds; and, by all accounts, his preaching deserved its popularity. Those who heard him have told us, that we have no idea of what he was then, from his more recent exhibitions. He "laid about him like a man inspired." He spoke with the freshness and fervour of one to whom all things had become new. His eye seemed to see the invisible. His body trembled and panted under the burden of the present God. He proclaimed openly and aloud the nuptials of science and faith. He assailed the money-loving and the sceptical spirit which then prevailed in our western metropolis. He set in motion, at the same time, a thousand schemes of benevolence. Glasgow was planet-struck: its gayest and most dissipated young men were arrested, and hung upon his lips like "bees on mountain flowers." It became suddenly a religious, or, at least, an ecclesiastical city, and with all its mills and machineries seemed to revolve for a season round the one pulpit of Chalmers. Not the least striking tribute to the power of his eloquence were the tears which he drew from Professor Young's old eyes! It was fine, they say, to see the stern Grecian's face, first radiant with rapture, and then dissolved and bedewed, under the power of an eloquence still higher than his own. His subsequent translation to St John's, his removal to the Professorship of Moral Philosophy in St Andrews, the impulse he gave to that then stagnant and grass-grown city, his transference to the Divinity Chair of Edinburgh, &c., are well known.

As a divine, his reputation is not of the highest order. He has cast no new light upon any topic within the range of the science. He is not a master of Exegesis: his critical knowledge of the Scriptures is limited. A plain and practical logician upon theological topics, his temperament forbids him ever to be. A profound metaphysician he is not called by his warmest admirers. What is he to Jonathan Edwards, that master of metaphysical theology; or to Paley, so profoundly versed in the "Christian Evidences;" or to Andrew Thomson, in all that constitutes a proficient in Christian logic; or to Barrow, in quantity and compass of thought; or to Horsley, in ease and vigour of style; or to Jeremy Taylor, in the richness and splendour of illustration; or to Leighton, in the sweetness and savour of practical bearing? And yet, as a divinity professor, we grant him much merit. Called by circumstances, rather than choice, to the theological chair, unprepared by previous training and habits of study for its peculiar duties, he yet resolutely set himself and the resources of his mind to "do what he could." He read, and he made his students read. He taught himself while instructing them. He relieved the occasional sameness of his own style and imagery, by large and grateful excerpts from leading theological writers. He threw the glow of his genius into all that was done. He shook from the professorial chair the dust of ages. He evoked the spirit of great departed worthies. His en-

thusiasm became infectious: the most commonplace of his students caught it. The more ambitious "out-Heroded Herod" in imitations of his style, and manner, and voice:—

"Many who strove to imitate his flight,
With weaker wing, unearthly fluttering made."

Still much good was done, and an impression produced which has formed an era in the history of the Scottish Church, and of the entire religious world.

His appearance and mode of speaking have been often described. His eye, especially when excited, had a grey glare of insanity about it; his brow was broad, rather than lofty; his step quick and eager; his accents fast and hurrying; his pronunciation barbarous; his gesture awkward; his delivery monotonous; but, need we say, all these defects were forgotten and drowned in the fierce and rapid stream of his eloquence. We have seen his face flushing up, like a crystal goblet when filled with wine, as he warmed with his theme: his eye the while almost starting out of its socket, as if determined, in spite of itself, to become eloquent. No one quotes poetry with more effect, and we have heard him give to a doggerel hymn an effect almost sublime. In private, he was the most benign and cordial of men: a generous critic, and a warm sympathiser with every species of genuine excellence. Altogether, though with many of his peculiar views we do not coincide; though with the flatteries of his indiscriminate admirers we do not agree; though we do not think him a Jeremy Taylor, nor a Barrow, nor a Chrysostom, nor a Burke, we are free to confess that he was a good, a wise, an honest, and a great man.

SECOND SITTING.

There are some subjects which seem absolutely inexhaustible. They may be compared to the alphabet, which, after 5000 years, is capable still of new and infinite combinations—or, to the sun, whose light is as fresh to-day as it was a million of ages ago—or to space, which has opened her hospitable bosom to myriads of worlds, and has ample room for myriads on myriads more. Such a fresh ever-welling theme is Chalmers, and will remain so for centuries to come; and we make no apology at all for bidding his mighty shade sit once more for its portrait, from no prejudiced or unloving hand. And here we propose first to give our own reminiscences of him; then to speak of the characteristics of his genius, eloquence, and purpose; and, in fine, to examine at some length his most popular work, his "Astronomical Discourses."

We first heard Dr Chalmers preach on Sabbath, the 9th of October, 1831, when introducing the Rev. Mr Martin, of St George's, Edinburgh, to his flock. Through the kindness of a friend who sat in the church, we obtained, although with difficulty, a seat in the very front of the gallery, near a pew in which, on Sabbath, the 8th of February, 1846, we enjoyed a comfortable nap under a sermon from the Rev. Dr Brunton! There was no napping THAT forenoon. We went, we remember, with excited but uncertain expectations. We had read Chalmers's "Astronomical Discourses," and had learned to admire them, but had no clear or decided view of their author, and were not without certain Dissenting prejudices against him. Being near-sighted, and the morning being rather dim, we could not catch a distinct glimpse of his features. We saw only a dark large mass of man bustling up the pulpit stairs, as if in some dread and desperate haste. We heard next a hoarse voice, first giving out the psalm in a tone of rapid familiar energy, and after it was sung, and prayer was over, announcing for text, "He that is unjust let him be unjust still" (*stull*, he pronounced it), "he that is filthy" (*fulthy*, he called it), "let him be filthy still, and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still, and he that is holy, let him be holy *stull*." And then, like an eagle leaving the mountain cliff, he launched out at once upon his subject, and soared on without any diminution of energy or flutter of

wing for an hour and more. The discourse is published, and most of our readers have probably read it. It had two or three magnificent passages, which made the audience for a season one soul. A burst especially we remember, in reference to the materialism of heaven—"There may be palms of triumph, I do not know—there may be floods of melody;" and then he proceeded to show that heaven was more a state than a place. On the whole, however, we were disappointed, as indeed we were, at the first blush, with all the Edinburgh notabilities. Strange as it may seem, neither Wilson, nor Chalmers, nor Professor Leslie, nor Dr Gordon, nor Jeffrey, produced, AT FIRST, on us a tithe of the impression which many country ministers, whose names are extant only in the Lamb's Book of Life, had easily and ineffaceably left. We learned, indeed, afterwards to admire Wilson and Chalmers to the very depths of our hearts; and John Bruce, whom at first, too, we rather disrelished, became ultimately an idol. But, on the whole, our first feeling, in reference to the Edinburgh celebrities, lay and cleric, was that of intense disappointment.

This feeling would be forgiven by the men themselves, or even by the warmest of their admirers, if they could have seen us, a year or two afterwards, listening to Wilson on the Immortality of the Soul, to John Bruce on the text, "The sting of death is sin," or to Thomas Chalmers repeating, at the opening of the General Assembly of 1833, the sermon on "He that is *filthy* let him be *filthy* still." That morning opened in all the splendour of May—and the Assembly which met knew that the Reform Bill had passed since its last session, and that it must become perforce a reforming Assembly too. Chalmers rose to the greatness of the occasion. After delivering, with greatly increased energy, all the original discourse, he added a new peroration of prodigious power, drawing the attention of his "Fathers and Brethren" to the circumstances in which they were placed, and to the duties to which they were called. It told like a thunderbolt. Even the gallery, which was half empty, was absolutely electrified; and the divinity students and young ladies, who had been perseveringly ogling each other there, were compelled to turn their eyes and hearts away towards the glowing countenance and heaving form of the "old man eloquent."

We occasionally heard him, too, in his class-room, always with great interest and often with vivid delight. Our tone of enthusiasm, however, was somewhat restrained, from our frequent intercourse with his students, who in general overrated him, and were sometimes disposed to cry out, "It is the voice of a god, not of a man," and whose imitations of his style and manner were frequent, and grotesquely unsuccessful. We never but once heard him there rise to his highest pitch. It was at the close of a lecture illustrating the character and claims of Christianity; when, grasping, as it were, all around him (like an assaulted man for a sword), in search of a yet stronger proof of his point, he lifted up his own "Astronomical Discourses," and read (with an eye glaring with sudden excitation—a voice "pealing harsh thunder"—and a motion as if some shirt of Nessus had just fallen upon his shoulders), amid dead silence, the following passage:—

"Let the priests of another faith ply their prudential expedients, and look so wise and so wary in the execution of them; but Christianity stands in a higher and firmer attitude. The defensive armour of a shrinking or timid policy does not suit her. Hers is the naked majesty of truth; and with all the grandeur of age, but with none of its infirmities, has she come down to us, and gathered new strength from the battles she has won in the many controversies of many generations. With such a religion as this there is nothing to hide. All should be aboveboard; and the broadest light of day should be made fully and freely to circulate through all her secresies. But secrets she has none. To her belong the frankness and simplicity of conscious greatness."

This is eloquent writing; but where

the fiery edge of bardic power which seemed to surround it as he spoke? That is gone; and the number must fast lessen of those who now can remember those strange accompaniments of Chalmers's eloquence—the uplifted, half-extracted eye—the large flushed forehead—the pallor of the cheek contrasting with it—the eager lips—the mortal passion struggling within the heaving breast—the furious motions of the short, fin-like arms, and the tones of the voice, which seemed sometimes to be grinding their way down into your ear and soul.

We heard Chalmers once, and only once, again. We have described the sermon in our former paper. We happened, in leaving the church, to pass near the orator, and were greatly struck with the rapt look of his face—

"The wind was down, but still the sea ran high."

A certain pallid gleam had succeeded the flushed ardour of his appearance in the pulpit. It was the last time we were ever to gaze on the strange, coarse, but most powerful and meaning countenance of Dr Chalmers.

And yet when, years later, we saw Duncan's picture of him, he seemed still alive before us. The leonine massiveness of the head, body, and brow—the majestic repose of the attitude—the eye withdrawn upwards into a deep happy dream—the air of simple homely grandeur about the whole person and bearing—were all those of Chalmers, and combined to prove him, next, perhaps, to Wilson, the Genius of Scotland—the hirsute Forest-God of a rugged but true-hearted land.

It was this air of unshorn power which marked him out from all his ecclesiastical contemporaries, and contributed in some measure to his popularity. Scotland—"the land of mountain and of flood"—loves that her idols shall be large and shaggy. Think of her worship of the rough John Knox—of the stalwart sons of the Covenant—of Burns and Wilson, the two tameless spirits!—and of her own homely, all-reflecting, and simple Sir Walter Scott. What cares she, in comparison with these for her polished Robertsons and Jeffreys?

It is well remarked by Jeffrey, in vindicating the Scottish language from the charge of vulgarity, that it is not the language of a province, like Yorkshire, but of an ancient and independent kingdom. So Chalmers's peculiarities and roughness of speech were those of the ancient "kingdom of Fife;" and in his "whuches," and his "fulthies," and his bad quantities, after the first blush, there was found a strange antique charm—they were of the earth, earthy, and suited the stout aboriginal character of the man. His roughness was but the rough grating of the wheels of the huge and wealthy wain, as it moved homewards over a rocky road, amid the autumn twilight, and told of rude plenty and of massive power.

The effects of his eloquence have been often described. Many orators have produced more cheers, and shone more in brilliant individual points; Chalmers's power lay in pressing on his whole audience before him, through the sheer momentum of genius and enthusiasm. He treated his hearers as constituting "one mind," and was himself "one strength," urging it, like a vast stone, upwards. In this he very seldom failed. He might not always convince the understandings—he often offended the tastes; but, unlike Sisyphus, he pushed his stone to the summit—he secured at least a temporary triumph.

This he gained greatly from the intensity of his views, as well as from the earnestness of his temperament, and the splendour of his genius. He had strong, clear, angular, although often one-sided and mistaken, notions on the subjects he touched; and these, by incessant reiteration, by endless turning round, by dint of dauntless furrowing, he succeeded in *ploughing* into the minds of his hearers. Or it seemed a process of *stamping:* "I must press such and such a truth on them, whether they hear or forbear. I shall stamp on till it is fixed undeniably and for ever upon their minds." Add to this the unconsciousness of himself. He

never *seemed*, at least, to be thinking about himself, nor very much of his hearers. He was occupied entirely with those "big bulking" ideas of which he was the mere organ, and he taught his audience to think of *them* principally too. How grand it was to witness a strong and gifted man transfigured into the mere medium of an idea!—his whole body so filled with its light that you seemed to *see it*, shining through him, as through a transparent vase!

His imagination was a quality in him of which much nonsense used to be said. It was now made his only faculty, and now it was described as of the Shakspere or Jeremy Taylor order. In fact, it was not by any means even his highest power. Strong, broad, Baconian logic was his leading faculty; and he had, besides, a boundless command of a certain order of language, as well as all the burning sympathies and energies of the orator. Taking him all in all, he was unquestionably a man of lofty genius; but it very seldom assumed the truly poetic form, and was rather warm than rich. Power of illustration he possessed in plenty; but in *curiosa felicitas*, short, compact, hurrying strokes as of lightning, and that fine sudden imagery, in which strong and beautiful thought so naturally incarnates itself, he was rather deficient. He was, consequently, one of our least terse and quotable authors. Few sentences, collecting in themselves the results of long trains of thinking, in a new and sparkling form—like "apples of gold in a network of silver"—are to be found in his writings. Nor do they abound in bare, strong aphorisms. Let those who would see his deficiency in this respect compare him, not with the Jeremy Taylors, Barrows, and Donnes, merely, but with the Burkes, Hazlitts, and Coleridges of a later day, and they will understand our meaning. His writings remind you rather of the sublime diffusiveness of a Paul, than of the deep, solitary, and splendid dicta of the great Preacher-King of ancient Israel.

A classic author he is not, and never can become. From this destiny, his Scotticisms, vulgarities, and new combinations of sounds and words, do not necessary exclude him; but his merits (as a MERE LITERARY man) do not counterbalance his defects. The power of the works, in fact, was not equal to the power of the man. He always, indeed, threw his heart, but not always his artistic consciousness, into what he wrote. Hence he is generally "rude in speech, although not in knowledge." His utterance is never confused, but it is often hampered, as of one speaking in a foreign tongue. This sometimes adds to the effect of his written composition—it often added amazingly to the force of those extempore harangues he was in the habit of uttering, amid the intervals of his lectures, to his students. Those stammerings, strugglings, repetitions, risings from and sittings down into his chair—often, however, coming to some fiery burst, or culminating in some rapid and victorious climax—were to us very interesting. You liked to see this strong-winged bird of the storm matching his might against it—now soaring up to overcome it—now sinking down to undermine it—now screaming aloud in its teeth—now half-choked in the gust of its fury—but always moving onwards, and sometimes riding triumphant on its changed or subjugated billow! But all this did not (except to those who had witnessed the phenomenon) tend to increase the artistic merit or permanent effect of his works.

No oratory can be printed *entire*. Every speaker, who is not absolutely dull and phlegmatic, says something far more through his tones, or eye, or gestures, than his bare words can tell. But this is more the case with some than with others. About the speaking of Whitfield there was a glare of—shall we say vulgar?—earnestness, which, along with his theatrical, but transcendent elocution, lives only in tradition. It was the same with Kirwan, a far more commonplace man. Struthers, a Relief minister in Edinburgh, at the beginning of this century, seems to have possessed the same incommunicable power, and his sermon on the Battle of Trafalgar lives as a mira-

culous memory on the minds of a few—and nowhere else. The late Dr Heugh of Glasgow possessed a Canning-like head, as well as a singular charm in his address, which have not, as they could not, be transferred to his printed sermons. And so, in perhaps a still larger degree, with Dr Chalmers; the difference being, that while in the others the manner seemed to fall out from the man, like a gay but becoming garment, in Chalmers it was wrapped convulsively around him, like the mantle of a dying Cæsar. It is but his naked body that we now behold.

Finer still it was, we have been told, to come in suddenly upon the inspired man in his study, when the full heat of his thought had kindled up his being into a flame—when, in concert with the large winter fire blazing beside him, his eye was flaming and speaking to itself—his brow flushing like a cloud in its solitude—his form moving like that of a Pythoness on her stool—and now and then his voice bursting silence, and showing that, as often in the church he seemed to fancy himself in solitude, so often in solitude he thought himself thundering in the church. Those who saw him in such moods had come into the forge of the Cyclops; and yet so far was he from being disturbed or angry, he would rise and salute them with perfect politeness and even kindliness; but they were the politeness and kindliness of one who had been interrupted while forming a two-edged sword for Mars, or carving another figure upon the shield of Achilles.

It is curious, entering in spirit into the *studies* or retirements of great authors, in the past or the present, and watching their various kinds and degrees of excitement while composing their productions. We see a number of interesting figures—Homer, with his sightless eyes, but ears preternaturally open, rhapsodising to the many-sounding sea his immortal harmonies—Æschylus, so agitated (according to *tradition*) while framing his terrible dialogues and choruses, that he might have been mistaken for his own Orestes pursued by the Furies—Dante, stern, calm, silent, yet with a fierce glance at times from his hollow eye, and a convulsive movement in his tiger-like lower jaw, telling of the *furor* that was boiling within—Shakspere, serene even over his tragic, and smiling a gentle smile over his comic, creations—Scott, preserving, alike in depicting the siege of Torquilstone, the humours of Caleb Balderstone, and the end of the family of Ravenswood, the same gruff yet good-natured equanimity of countenance—Byron, now scowling a fierce scowl over his picture of a shipwreck, and now grinning a ghastly smile while dedicating his "Don Juan" to Southey—Shelley, wearing on his fine features a look of perturbation and wonder, as *if* a cherub only *half* fallen, and not yet at home in his blasphemous attitude of opposition to the Most High—Wordsworth, murmuring a solemn music over the slowly-filling page of "Ruth," or the "Eclipse in Italy"—Coleridge, nearly asleep, and dreaming over his own gorgeous creations, like a drowsy bee in a heather bloom—Wilson, as Hogg describes him, when they sat down to write verses in neighbouring rooms, *howling* out his enthusiasm (and when he came to this pitch, poor Hogg uniformly felt himself vanquished, and threw down his pen!)—or, in fine, Chalmers, as aforesaid, agonising in the sweat of his great intellectual travail!

We have spoken of Chalmers as possessed of an idea which drowned his personal feelings, and pressed all his powers into one focus. This varied, of course, very much at different stages of his history. It was, at first, that of a purely scientific theism. He believed in God as a dry demonstrated fact, which he neither trembled at nor loved—whose personality he granted, but scarcely seems to have *felt*. From this he passed to a more decided form of belief, worship, and love for the great I Am, and is said to have spent a portion of his youth in constant and delighted meditation upon God and his works, like one of the ancient Indian or Egyptian mystics. From this pillar he descended, and, as a preacher, tried to form a compromise between science and a certain shallow and stripped form of

Christianity. The attempt was sincere, but absurd in idea, and unsuccessful in execution. The *vitality* of Christianity became next his darling argument, and was pled by him with unmitigated urgency for many years. Christianity must be alive, active, aggressive, or was no Christianity at all. This argument began, by and by, in his mind to strike out into various branches. If alive and life-giving, Christianity ought to give life, first of all, to literary and scientific men; secondly, to the commercial classes; thirdly, to the poor; and fourthly, to governments. And we may see this four-headed argument pervading his book on Astronomy, his "Sermons on Commerce," his "Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns," and his innumerable brochures on the questions of Church Extension and of Non-intrusion. Nay, in his penultimate paper in the "North British Review," we find him, almost with his last breath, renewing the cry for "fruit," as the main answer to that tide of German scepticism which none saw more clearly than he coming over the church and the world. That he always pled this great argument of practicalising Christianity with discretion or success, we are far from asserting; nay, we grant that he committed as many blunders as he gained triumphs. Nor have the results been commensurate. Literary and scientific men have not, alas! listened to the voice of this charmer, but have walked on their own uneasy way, over the "burning marl" of unhappy speculation. The commercial spirit of the times is far enough yet from being thoroughly Christianised; and the "golden rule" does not yet hang suspended over our warehouses and dockyards. The poor are, as a mass, sinking every year more and more deeply into the gulfs of infidelity and vice; and the great problem of how the State is to help—if it help at all—the Church, seems as far from solution as in the year 1843 or 1847. Still, Chalmers has not lived in vain. He has left a burning testimony against many of the crying evils of his time, especially against that Selfishness which is poisoning almost all ranks alike, and in which, as in one stagnant pool, so many elements, otherwise discordant, are satisfied to "putrify in peace." He has taken up the reproach of the gospel, and bound it as a crown around his brow. From the most powerful pulpit in the land, he preached Christ and him crucified. He has created various benevolent and pious movements, which are likely long to perpetuate his memory. And he has laid his hand upon, and to some degree, although not altogether, shattered, those barriers—either absurd in the folly of man, or awful in the providence of God—which have too long separated Christian principle from general progress, the Bible from the people, the pulpit from the press, and made religion little else than "a starry stranger" in an alien land. We accept him as a rude type of better things—as the dim day-star of a new and brighter era.

We linger as we trace over in thought the leading incidents of his well-known story. We see the big-headed, warm-hearted, burly boy, playing upon the beach at Anstruther, and seeming like a gleam of early sunshine upon that coldest of all coasts. We follow him as he strides along with large, hopeful, awkward steps to the gate of St Andrews. We see him, a second Dominie Sampson, in his tutor's garret at Arbroath, in the midst of a proud and pompous family—himself as proud, though not so pompous, as they. We follow him next to the peaceful manse of Kilmeny, standing amid its green woods and hills, in a very nook of the land, whence he emerges, now to St Andrews, to battle with the stolid and slow-moving professors of that day; now to Dundee, to buy materials for chemical research (on one occasion setting himself on fire with some combustible substance, and requiring to run to a farmhouse to get himself put out!); now to the woods and hills around to botanise—ay, even on the Sabbath-day!—and now to Edinburgh to attend the General Assembly, and give earnest of those great oratorical powers which were afterwards to astonish the Church and the world. With solemn awe we stand by his bedside during that long,

mysterious illness, which brought him to himself, and taught him that religion was a reality, as profound as sin, sickness, and death. We mark him then, rising up from his couch, like an eagle newly bathed —like a giant refreshed—and commencing that course of evangelical teaching and action only to be terminated in the grave. We pursue him to Glasgow, and see him sitting down in a plain house in Sauchiehall Road, and proceeding to write sermons which are to strike that city like a planet, and make him the real King of the West. We mark him, next, somewhat worn and wearied, returning to his *alma mater*, to resume his old games of golf on the Links, his old baths in the Bay, and to give an impetus, which has never yet entirely subsided, to that grass-grown city of Rutherford and Halyburton. Next we see him bursting like a shell this narrow confine, and soaring away to "stately Edinburgh, throned on crags," to become there a principality and power among many, and to give stimulus and inspiration to hosts of young aspirants.

With less pleasure we follow the after-steps of his career—the restless and uneasy agitations in which he engaged, which shook the energies of his constitution, impaired the freshness of his mind, and paved the way for his premature and hasty end. With deep interest, however, we see him sitting at the head of a new and powerful ecclesiastical body, which owed, if not its existence, yet much of its glory, to him; so that the grey head of Chalmers in that Canonmills Hall seemed to outshine the splendours of mitres, and coronets, and crowns. We watch him, with still profounder feelings, preaching to the poor outcasts of the West Port, or sitting like a little child beside them, as others are telling them the simple story of the Cross. We follow him on his "last pilgrimage" to the south—confronting senates—going out of his way to visit the widows of Hall and Foster—bursting into the studies of sublime unhappy sceptics, and giving them a word in season—preaching wherever he had opportunity, and returning in haste to die! And our thoughts and feelings rise to a climax, as we hear the midnight cry, "Behold the Bridegroom cometh!" raised beside his couch; and, entering in, behold the grand old Christian Giant—the John Knox of the nineteenth century—laid gently on his pillow, asleep, with that sleep which knows no waking, till the trumpet shall sound, and when HE surely shall be among the foremost to rise to meet the Master, and to go in with him into the eternal banqueting-room.

What divine of the age, on the whole, can we name with Chalmers? Horsley was, perhaps, an abler man, but where the moral grandeur? Hall had the moral grandeur, and a far more cultivated mind; Foster had a sterner, loftier, and richer genius; but where, in either, the seraphic ardour, activity, and energy of Christian character possessed by Chalmers? Irving, as an orator, had more artistic skill, and, at the same time, his blood was warm with a more volcanic and poetic fire; but he was only a brilliant fragment, not a whole—he was a meteor to a star—a comet to a sun—a Vesuvius, peaked, blue, crowned with fire, to a domed Mont Blanc. Chalmers stood alone; and centuries may elapse ere the Church shall see—and when did she ever more need to see?—another such spirit as he.

We come now, in fine, to examine the argument of the "Astronomical Discourses," and to make a few closing remarks on Astronomy, expanding, and in some important points modifying, the views propounded in our "First Sitting."

The "Astronomical Discourses" were a kind of chemico-theologic experiment at the beginning. Chalmers was fond, we know, of turning the air-pump, as well as of pursuing the queerest chemical, or pneumatic, or dietetic whims. Soon after he arrived in Glasgow, and while the city was yet vibrating to the electric shock he gave it on his first entrance, he determined to deepen and prolong the thrill, by snatching an argument for Christianity from the stars. He had often gazed at the gleaming host of heaven, now with the mathematical purpose of the astronomer, and now with the abandonment and enthusiasm of the poet. Along with stars,

doubts and dark questions had shot across his soul, and he set himself, in his "Astronomical Discourses," in seeking to answer the objections of others, to give and to enshrine the reply to his own.

Sooth to say, the answer was about as shallow as the argument. All attacks on Christianity founded on physics are essentially and *ab origine* worthless. Christianity has nothing whatever to do with physical or metaphysical conjectures about the conformation of the universe, and nothing yet has transpired beyond conjecture on that wondrous theme. Even gravitation is but a big-sounding name for a series of inscrutable affinities between larger and lesser particles of matter; and truly did Newton call himself a boy, gathering, in his resplendent generalisations, only a few bigger and brighter pebbles on the shore of the unsearchable ocean of truth. Even the pebbles HE gathered may yet be more severely analysed, and found perhaps to be air! In metaphysics it is still worse. For there we have not even pebbles; but a shower of conflicting sand-grains tossed up and down upon breaths as vain and varied as the winds of the African wilderness!

Across this wide and burning waste of stones and shifting sands of thought, there came, 2000 years ago, a still small voice —the voice of the Man-God of Galilee, saying, nor saying in vain, "Peace, be still." He was no physicist—only the waves obeyed His voice. He was no metaphysician — only He "knew what was in man." He never discoursed on sympathy or patriotism, but His heart bled at the tales and sight of the wretched, the forlorn, and the forgotten. He uttered no dogmatic system either of morality, or politics, or religion, but he spoke as never man spake; He breathed, as it were, on the world, and it revived at the breath; His word was the inspiration, His death the life, and His last blessing the legacy of the world. His faith at once established itself as something entirely different from, and incomparably higher than, all earthly systems and theories. It appealed directly to the moral nature. It sought and found an echo in the heart and conscience. There it fixed, and there it still holds, its inexpugnable foundations. It is friendly to all true philosophy, and science, and literature; but it regards them as we could conceive an angel regarding an assembly of earthly sages. It is not of their order. It is impassive to all scientific attacks, and hardly requires scientific defence. It dwells apart—a glorious anomaly, even as its founder was. It is a stranger on the earth, and its great purpose is to gather its own out of this ruined world, and to take them away to heaven.

Hence, we repeat, attacks, however able and ingenious, may seem to shake, but cannot overturn it. They have never been able to approach its seat of life, or its fortress of power. What, for example, has it to do with the length of time taken up in building this globe, or with the size of the starry firmament? Christ came not to give any information on these subjects, but to announce the "golden rule." Paul preached not on such topics, but on righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come. The gospel is a message of mercy to a fallen race, and bears no other burden with it. It has not been elicited or elaborated from the universe, or the mind of man—it has come into both from a higher region, and it is not amenable to the laws of this cold and cloudy clime. Shake its power over the moral nature, and you destroy its essence; but, as long as this remains, all minor difficulties and objections pass by like the idle wind.

Dr Chalmers does not seem, at least when writing his "Astronomical Discourses," to have been sufficiently impressed with these views of Christianity. He was, on the contrary, anxious to find for it a scientific basis, and to answer all scientific objections. He found one of these floating about in conversation—it had probably often impressed his own mind—and he must drag it forth and put it to death. This attempt he has made with prodigious energy, but, we humbly think, with indifferent success. He has mangled, it may be, the neck of the victim with his steel, but he has not deprived it even of the little life it had.

The first of these famous sermons is a

powerful sketch of the modern astronomy. It blazes like a January heaven. He mounts up toward his magnificent theme like a strong eagle toward the sun, and his eye never winks, and his wing never for a moment flags. We, who have been so long familiar with the facts of astronomy, have no conception of the freshness and the overwhelming force with which, in Chalmers's style, they fell on a Presbyterian Glasgow audience in the year 1817. Few of the common class of Calvinists in Scotland, at that date, were even Copernicans; down as far as the year 1825 or 1826, we have heard some of them gravely maintaining that there were only "two worlds —that which is, and that which is to come." How amazed must these readers of Boston's "Fourfold State" have been, to hear their most admired divine pouring out his sublime Newtonics from the Tron Church pulpit with such fearlessness and freedom! What had seemed heresy from any other man, seemed from Chalmers revelation. He stood up week after week, and read off to astonished crowds the burning hieroglyphics of the orbs of heaven. The excitement was unparalleled. The novelty of the theme—the daring of some of the individual flights —the apparent force of the argumentation —the almost superhuman excitation of the orator, who seemed to heave, and leap, and swelter, and burn, and groan under the burden of immediate inspiration, carried Glasgow away in a whirlwind. We were then mere children, nor did we hear Chalmers till fourteen years later; but, great as his excitement continued, we were assured by those who had heard him in earlier days, that it was calmness, compared to the prophetic fury with which he delivered his "Astronomical Discourses."

Professor Nichol has come after, and in some measure supplanted Chalmers as an eloquent interpreter to the language of the stars. Without the rapt and rushing force of Chalmers's style, he has a calm and deep hush of manner as he walks under the stupendous sublimities of his subject, which is very thrilling. Chalmers claps his hands in enthusiastic joy, as he looks up toward the gleaming midnight; Nichol bows his head before it. Chalmers is moved and moves us most to rapture; Nichol is moved and moves us most to wonder. Chalmers plunges like a strong swimmer into the stellar ocean, and ploughs his nervous way through its burning waves; Nichol walks beside it on tiptoe, and points in silent awe to its unutterable grandeur. While Chalmers shouts, "Glorious"—while Carlyle sighs, "Ah! it's a sad sight"—Nichol, perhaps more forcibly, expresses his emotion by folding his arms, and speaking in whispers, or remaining dumb.

The second discourse is on the "Modesty of True Science," and is chiefly remarkable for its panegyric on Sir Isaac Newton—certainly the noblest tribute to that illustrious man ever paid, unless we except Thomson's fervid poem on his death. Yet, while panegyrising "modesty," the author makes one or two rather bold and unwarranted suppositions; for instance, that sin has probably found its way into other worlds—that the Eternal Son "may have had the government of many sinful worlds laid upon his shoulders"—and that the Spirit "may now be working with the fragments of another chaos, and educing order, and obedience, and harmony out of the wrecks of a moral rebellion, which reaches through all these spheres, and spreads disorder to the uttermost limits of our astronomy." Indeed, the great defect of these discourses is, that he is perpetually meeting assumptions with assumptions, and repelling one conjecture by another equally groundless. In the third sermon he states the infidel argument as follows: —"Such a humble portion of the universe as ours could never have been the object of such high and distinguishing attentions as Christianity has assigned to it. God would not have manifested himself in the flesh for the salvation of so paltry a world. The monarch of a whole continent would never move from his capital, and lay aside the splendour of royalty, and subject himself for months or for years to perils, and poverty, and persecution, and take up his abode in some small islet of

his dominions, which, though swallowed by an earthquake, could not be missed amid the glories of so wide an empire; and all this to regain the lost affection of a few families upon its surface. And neither would the Eternal Son of God—he who is revealed to us as having made all worlds, and as holding an empire amid the splendours of which the globe that we inherit is shaded in insignificance—neither would he strip himself of the glory he had with the Father before the world was, and light on this lower scene, for the purpose imputed to him in the New Testament. Impossible that the concerns of this puny ball, which floats its little round among an infinity of larger worlds, should be of such mighty account in the plans of the Eternal, or should have given birth in heaven to so wonderful a movement, as the Son of God putting on the form of our degraded species, and sojourning among us, and sharing in all our infirmities, and crowning the whole scene of humiliation by the disgrace and the agonies of a cruel martyrdom."

We will not stop to object to the theological mis-statement in one of the sentences of this passage. Christ did not, could not, lay aside the "splendour of royalty"—he merely veiled it from the eyes of men, and it was not "himself," in the whole meaning of that expression, but simply his human nature, that was subjected to "perils, and poverty, and persecution."

But, waiving this, let us notice how Chalmers proceeds to answer the objection. He does this first by dwelling, with much munificence and rhythmical flow of language, upon the extent of the Divine condescension; and his picture of the powers and achievements of the microscope is exceedingly beautiful. Yet it is one-sided. For, if the microscope shows us divine Providence watching over the very lowest hem and skirts of animal existence, does it not also show us rage, animosity, evil, and death, burning on the very brink of nothing—a Waterloo in every water-drop? Besides, the microscope serves only to prove the universal prevalence of certain laws; it does not discover any analogy to that special love and supernatural interference found in the history of Christianity. It proves simply that God condescends to care for every being he has condescended to create; but would never, previous to experience, suggest the possibility of God *saving*, by a peculiar and abnormal method, a race that had fallen. On such a subject, telescope and microscope are alike silent; they say nothing for it, but they say nothing against it. The whole discourse, therefore, we consider an eloquent evasion of the question, notwithstanding the magnificent burst with which it closes, the reading of which, by himself, we have already described.

In his fourth discourse he attempts to prove that man's moral history is known in distant parts of the creation; and thence to argue its vast importance and general bearings. The evidence he produces is entirely derived from Scripture, and is neither very abundant nor very strong. He tries to show, first, that "the history of the redemption of our species is known in other and distant parts of the creation; and then, secondly, indistinctly to guess at the fact that the redemption itself may stretch beyond the limits of the world we occupy."

In reference to the first, he tells us that Scripture "speaks most clearly and most decisively about the knowledge of man's redemption being disseminated among other orders of created intelligence than our own." And yet, strange to say, the first proof he produces of this is the conversation on Mount Tabor between Moses and Elias with Jesus, on the "decease to be accomplished at Jerusalem," as if these two glorified beings belonged to another "order of created intelligence" than ours—as if they were not the "spirits of just MEN made perfect." He next introduces the song of the angels, and the text "unto these things the angels desire to look"—forgetting that the angels are circulating perpetually *through* the universe; that they are the servants—the ministering spirits—of the good; and that it is impossible to argue from their knowledge of our earthly affairs to that of the myriads

of stationary inhabitants of space—if such there be in the other planets and systems of the universe. There had not then appeared Isaac Taylor's admirable paper entitled the "State of Seclusion," in which the author shows so strikingly the advantages which have accrued from the insulated position of the various worlds of space, as securing more completely the probation of moral beings. What Taylor means is this: could we, from this isle of earth, see *all* the consequences, whether of good or of bad, as manifested in the innumerable orbs, which he *supposes* to be replete with intellectual and moral life, we should be *driven*, not led, from vice and into virtue—so enormous would appear the superiority of the one over the other in its effects. But God has secluded us from other worlds, and them from us, that our will may have freer play in choosing good and refusing evil; that the great irrevocable choice may be less a matter of necessity and of terror, and more of voluntary consent. Hence, too, the deep shroud of darkness which Scripture keeps suspended over the secrets of the future world. Dr Chalmers, too, in the passages he quotes about Christ's gathering into one all things in heaven and in earth, and about "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," saying "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth on the throne; and unto the Lamb for ever and ever"—does not advert to the fact that all this is to be done, and said, and sung, *after* this present system has passed. Meanwhile, there is not the most distant evidence that the inhabitants of other worlds, if such there be (for this, too, is a point of extreme uncertainty), know more of our moral state than we do of theirs, which is precisely nothing at all.

The fifth discourse of the series contains some most melting and eloquent descriptions of the sympathy felt for man in the distant places of the creation. Still, so far as argument is concerned, it does not help forward his point one step. For that man alone has fallen, is one assumption; and even supposing that he has—that this is known throughout the whole universe is another. Angels do know, indeed, that man is a sinner, and do feel for us; but angels can hardly be called inhabitants of the material creation at all; they are celestial couriers—winged flames passing through it—and it is only incidentally that we know that even they sympathise with our low and lost estate. Again, too, we urge the principle of "seclusion;" and ask, besides, if the inhabitants of other planets (supposing such there be) are *un*fallen, might not the knowledge of a fallen earth damp their joy? If they *are* fallen, might it not encourage their rebellion?

The sixth sermon is perhaps the most powerful of the seven. *Fervet immensusque ruit.* Towards the close especially it becomes a torrent of fire. After describing the great contest of angels and demons over the dead Patroclus, Man, he says:—

"But this wondrous contest will come to a close. Some will return to their loyalty, and others will keep by their rebellion; and in the day of the winding-up of the drama of this world's history, there will be made manifest to the myriads of the various orders of creation both the mercy and the vindicated majesty of the Eternal. Oh! on that day, how vain will this presumption of the infidel astronomy appear, when the affairs of men come to be examined in the presence of an innumerable company; and beings of loftiest nature are seen to crowd around the judgment-seat; and the Saviour shall appear in our sky, with a celestial retinue, who have come with him from afar to witness all his doings, and to take a deep and solemn interest in all his dispensations; and the destiny of our species, whom the infidel would thus detach in solitary insignificance from the universe altogether, shall be found to merge and mingle with higher destinies; the good to spend their eternity with angels—the bad to spend their eternity with angels; the former to be re-admitted into the universal family of God's obedient worshippers—the latter to share in the ever-

lasting pain and ignominy of the rebellious; the people of this planet to be implicated throughout the whole train of their never-ending history with the higher ranks and more extended tribes of intelligence."

This passage is not only exceedingly eloquent and solemn, but seems to contain the strongest argument in the volume for the importance of man. The only weak point in the sermon perhaps lies in his apparently supposing that the universe is *now* aware of this mighty contest which is going on between purely spiritual beings for the possession. As well say that all Europe was literally looking on Waterloo on the very day of the battle when its fate was decided. This earth will not assume its real aspect of dignity and importance till after its wonderful history is over, and perhaps itself burned up.

The seventh sermon is on the slender influence of mere taste and sensibility in matters of religion; and appears, indeed, to be an eloquent apology for the whole series, and a virtual admission that in it he had rather pleased the taste and touched the sensibility, than informed the judgment, confirmed the faith, or refuted the adversary. We look, in fact, upon this volume as not worthy, as a whole, of its author's talents. It is a mass of brilliant froth. The thought is slight and slender, when compared to the abundance of the verbiage which clothes it. The language is often loose and coarse to the last degree. The argument, so far as we know, never convinced a gainsayer; and, indeed, none but a very silly infidel could have been convinced by it: we were going to say that none but a very feeble thinker could even have started the objection, till we remembered, not only that it seems to have rested at one time like a load upon Chalmers's own soul—and he, need we say, as his "Bridgewater Treatise" proves, could be as subtle at times as he was eloquent always—but that Daniel Webster was long puzzled and kept back from embracing Christianity through its influence. But Webster, to be sure, thought generally like a lawyer, seldom like a legislator or philosopher. He was one of those men of whom Burke says, "Aristotle, the great master of reasoning, cautions us, and with great weight and propriety, against a species of *delusive geometrical accuracy* in moral arguments, as the most fallacious of all sophistry."

Let us now try ourselves with all diffidence to meet the objection fairly and fully in the face; and we would do so, first, by asking what has magnitude to do with a moral question? secondly, what, above all, has magnitude to do with a moral question, unless it be proved to be peopled by moral beings? and, thirdly, what is magnitude compared to mind?

First, what has magnitude to do with a moral question? what has the size of a man to do with his soul? is not the mind the standard of the man? What has the size of a city to do with the moral character of its inhabitants? what have size, number, and quantity, to do with the intellectual or moral interest, which may be, or may not be, connected with the plains of a country? Whether is Ben Nevis or Bannockburn the dearer to a Scottish heart—though the one is the prince of Scottish hills, and the other only a paltry plain, undistinguished except by a solitary stone, and by the immortal memories of patriotism and of courage which gather around that field wherein the "Scots who had wi' Wallace bled" bade "welcome to their gory bed, or to victory?" Whether is Mont Blanc or Morgarten the nobler object, though the one be the monarch of mountains, and the other only an obscure field, where the Swiss met and baffled their Austrian oppressors, and first in the shock was the arm of William Tell? Whether is dearer to the Christian's mind Caucasus or Calvary—the one the loftiest of Asia's mountains; the other only a little hill, a mere dot on the surface of the globe? So may there not issue from this tiny earth of ours—from the noble deeds it has witnessed, from the high aspirations which have been breathed up from it, from the magnificent thoughts which have been conceived on its surface, from the eloquent words that have stirred its air into music, from the poets who have wrought its words into undying

song, from the philosophers who have explained the secret of its laws, from the men of God who have knelt down in its temples—a tide of glory before which the lustre of suns and constellations shall tremble and melt away.

But, secondly,* what has magnitude to do with a moral question, if it cannot be proved that that magnitude is peopled with moral beings? Science, indeed, may and does hope that each fair star has its own beautiful and happy race of immortal intelligences; but science does not *know*. For aught science knows, there may be no immortal intelligences except man, angels, God, and devils, in the wide creation. For aught science knows, those suns and systems may be seen only by our eyes and our telescopes; for aught she knows, the universe may only be beginning to be peopled, and earth have been selected as the first spot for the great colonisation. The peopling of our own planet was a gradual process. Why may not the same be concluded of the universe of which our earth is a part? May not earth in this sense be an Eden to other regions of the All? Are appearance and analogy pleaded as proofs that the universe is peopled throughout? Appearance and analogy here utter an uncertain sound; for are not all the suns, or what we call the continents of creation, seemingly burning masses, uninhabitable by any beings we can even conceive of? Do not many of the planets, or islands, appear either too near or too remote from the central blaze to support animal existence? The moon (the only planet with which we are particularly acquainted) has manifestly not yet arrived at the state necessary for supporting living beings, and science remembers that innumerable ages passed ere even our globe was fitted for receiving its present population, and that, according to the researches of geology, the earth rolled round the sun for ages, a vast and weltering wilderness. Here, then, science is totally silent, or utters only a faltering "perhaps." Is it said, that but for intelligent beings space would be empty? How! empty if it contain an entire Deity in its every particle? Is God not society enough for his own creation? Shall you call the universe empty if God be present in it, even though he were present alone? Science, indeed, grants it probable that much of the universe is already peopled; but she grants no more. But, as long as this probability is not swelled to a certainty, it can never interfere in any way whatever with the fixed, solid, immutable evidences of our Christian faith.

We ask, thirdly, what is material magnitude compared to mind? The question is: Why did God, who made the vast creation, interfere to save the human spirit at such immense expense, and by a machinery so sublime and miraculous? Now, in reply to this, we assert the ineffable dignity of the human spirit. The creation, large and magnificent as it is, is not equal in grandeur to one immortal mind. Majestic the universe is; but can it think, or feel, or reason, or imagine, or hope, or love? "Talk to me of the sun!"—one might say, standing up in all the conscious dignity of his own nature; "but the sun is not alive; he is but a dead luminary after all; I am alive, I never was dead, I never can die; I may therefore put my foot upon that proud orb, and say, I am greater than thou. The sun cannot understand the geometry of his own motion, nor the laws of his own radiating light. I can do both, and am, therefore, immeasurably greater than the sun. The sun cannot, with all his rays, write on flower, or grass, or the broad page of ocean, his Maker's name. A child of seven years old can, and is therefore greater than the sun. The sun cannot, from his vast surface, utter one articulate sound; he is dumb in his magnificence; but 'out of the mouth of babes and sucklings' God perfects praise. The sun cannot love one of the planets which revolve round his ray. You and I can love all beings; nay, were our heart large enough, we could, in the language of the German, 'clasp the universe to our bosom, and keep it warm.' The sun shall be plucked from its sphere

* This was written and published years before the masterly treatise on the "Plurality of Worlds," attributed to Whewell, appeared.

and perish, but I have that within me which shall never die.

'The sun is but a spark of fire, a transient meteor in the sky;
But I—immortal as his sire, shall never die!'

And if greater than the sun, I am greater than the entire universe. It might, indeed, rise and crush me, but I should know it was destroying me, whilst it would crush blindly and unconsciously. I should be conscious of *defeat;* it would not be conscious of *victory*. The universe may be too great now for the grasp of my intellect; but my mind, I feel, can grow to grasp it. The universe, in fact, is only the nursery to my immortal mind; and whether is greater—the nursery or the child? The universe—you may call it what you please; you may lavish epithet upon epithet of splendour upon it if you please; but you can never call it one thing—you can never call it a spirit; and if not a spirit, it is but a great and glorious clod. But I am a spirit, though a spirit disguised in matter; an immortality, though an immortality veiled in flesh; a beam from the source of light, though a beam that has gone astray; and therefore I dare to predicate even of my own fallen nature, that there is more dignity, and grandeur, and value in it, than in the whole inanimate creation; and that to save no more but me, it were worth while for the Saviour to have descended, and for the Saviour to have died."

We pass to make a few closing remarks, different in many points from those in former parts of these Galleries, on some points connected with the "Star-eyed Science," premising that we are mere amateurs, and know very little of the details of the study.

We yield to no man in admiration of the splendours of the heavens. They are a book of beauty, opened up every night over our heads, and each beautiful line includes a great and living moral. But we think, first, that the terms "infinity" and "immensity" are unduly applied to them; secondly, that they give us no new light as to the history or destiny of man; thirdly, that the telescope, as a mental and magical instrument, has been overrated; fourthly, that the inference of the insignificance of man, drawn from the vastness of the universe, is altogether illogical; fifthly, that astronomical discovery has nearly reached its limits; sixthly, that the astronomy of man's soul is infinitely grander than that of the starry heavens, and is but distantly related to it; and, finally, that there is no reason to believe that death and the immortality which lie beyond will allow us to remain in those material regions of which the stars are the shining summits. We hope for our readers' indulgence as we try to explain more fully what we mean.

First, we hear astronomers often speaking of those "infinities," those "immensities;" words which, though used sometimes rhetorically, are always fitted to give a false impression to the general mind. The universe is *not* infinite. As well say of a drop of water that it is infinite, as that a universe is. The vastest and most complicated firmament is not one step nearer the abstract and absolute idea of infinity, than is a curled shaving in a joiner's shop. The infinite aspect the Creation assumes is a mere illusion of our eye, the dimness of a weak and bounded vision. The universe is just the multiplication of a sand-grain or fire-particle, and by multiplying the finite, how can we reach the infinite? "Who can, by *searching*, find out God?"

"A metaphysical difficulty," says Isaac Taylor (if we need clench a statement so obvious by authority), "prevents us from ever regarding the material universe as infinite." And if not infinite, what is it but an elongation and fiery exaggeration of any boy-bubble blown on the streets? Away, then, with the words which sound much, and mean nothing, of "infinity" and "immensity," applied to that mere scaffolding to the eternal and inner fabric, which is all our earthly eyes or telescopes now or ever can possibly behold!

Secondly, those enormous discoveries of the Newtonian and Herchellian heavens have not really told us anything new in reference to the great mystery of man

—of his being, history, destiny, or relation to God. They have simply transferred and magnified the difficulties by which we are environed on this isle of earth. They have not, hitherto, shed one beam of light on any moral theme. It is, as yet, utterly uncertain, for all the stars can teach us, whether the universe beyond our globe be peopled or not; on the moral state of their populations (if populations there be) the sky, however strictly questioned or cross-questioned, remains quite silent. In fact, a large crowd of silent human faces, looking up towards an uncommon phenomenon in the heavens, reflect as much light *up* on it, as do the stars *down* upon the anomalous and awful condition of the human family. Blank ignorance, blind astonishment, or helpless pity, are all the feelings with which even imagination can invest their still, persevering, yet solemn gaze. Foster, in one of his journals, seems rather to rejoice in the notion that they are made of *fire;* because in this there is one link connecting us with the remotest luminaries of heaven. Some philosophers doubt, we believe, if this be a fact; but, at all events, we wonder that he did not see, on his own showing, and in accordance with his own gloomy notions, that the universe might be literally called one vast hell; a "burning fiery furnace," to be quenched only in the final extinction of all things. If the stars *are* fire, it may be a fire in which all the earths and alkalis around them are slowly, but certainly, to be consumed. And thus the great mirror of the midnight heavens becomes rather a reflector of the austere purposes of the divine Destructiveness, than of the prosperous career of even regenerated man. In fact, we humbly conceive that the discovery of a new family of animalculæ, or of a new gallery of minerals, would cast as much light upon human nature and history, as the revelation of firmaments upon firmaments of what seems distant and inscrutable flame.

Thirdly, the telescope, as a mental and magical instrument, has been overrated. The imagination of a poet, in a single dream, has often immeasurably outrun all its revelations. What has it told us, after all, but that our sun, a bright and burning point, has innumerable duplicates throughout space, and that these duplicates, by their position near each other, have assumed certain shapes, which are, however, perpetually shifting and changing, like the clouds on a windy day, in proportion to the power of the instrument which surveys them? And what have the two Herschells, or Arago, or Nichol, done to answer the questions —What is a sun, what is a system, what is a comet, what is a firmament, or what is the one "fiery particle" which pervades and forms, it is said, by expansion, the whole? It is as if a man, questioned as to the essence of the matter constituting an umbrella, were to reply by *unfurling* it, and deeming that thus the query was answered. The telescope, in one word, has only broadened the periphery of our view, but has not admitted us really into one of the secrets of heaven; the mystery of the atom has merely been transferred, *unsolved*, to that of the star-universe.

Fourthly, the inference of the insignificance of man, from the magnitude of the creation, as we have already hinted, is miserably illogical. A man, in reality, is as much overborne by the size of a hill or a house, as by that of the Herschellian skies. A mountain is a noble object; but why? because man sees it, and sheds the meaning and the glory of his own soul over it. A sun is but a burnished breastplate till the same process passes over it, and man has said of it, in reverent imitation of the demiurgic Artist, "It is very good." The stars, too, must all wait in the antechamber of the human soul to receive their homage, to be told of their numbers, and to listen to their names. Even although these splendid bodies were peopled, man has no evidence that those beings are greater or purer than himself, any more than he has evidence that snow and torrid sunshine, anxiety, misery, and death, are confined to his sphere; a sphere which, dark, torn, and ruptured, to his eye, is (as the author of "Festus" hath it) "shining fair, whole, and spotless," a "living well of light," to spectators in the

far-off ether. What, in fact, are the increasing and receding firmaments of space, but the steps of a ladder on which man is climbing every year, without coming nearer to his great ultimate inheritance —space, eternity, and God.

Fifthly, it is clear to us that astronomical discovery has nearly reached its limit. That God designed to it a distinct and not distant period, seems plain from the separation which is effected of other worlds from ours by the nature of the human eye, by distance, and by that *dancing* phenomenon in the objects which we are told increases with the power of the telescope, and which makes the stars reel like drunkards, instead of sitting sober before the calm pictorial power of the instrument. All our recent cosmogonies, too, such as the nebular hypothesis, have been utterly exploded. And it is very curious how the world nearest us (the moon) seems the most perverse and inscrutable of all the heavenly puzzles; and it seems strange to us how, having looked so long on the absurdities of our world, and particularly on the theories propounded about itself, it has hitherto forborne to laugh! By and by, we suspect, man, even with Lord Rosse's telescope in his hand, may be seen stretching over the great gulf a baffled hand, and foot, and eye; baffled because he has reached at last the limits of his earthly platform.

Sixthly, but why should he, therefore, repine, or sit down and weep? "Can his own soul afford no scope?" Are there no stars within, no firmaments of central, yet celestial, fire? Astronomy is doubtless a magnificent study, but the mind which has made the telescope as an assistant eye for its investigation, is surely as worthy of investigation, nay, far more so. What comet so wonderful as the human will? What sun so warm and mysterious as the human heart? What double-orbed Gemini to be compared with the twin eyes of man? What firmament is like the wiry, waving, knotted, intesselated, and far-stretching brain, sending out its nervous undulations, even as the spiral nebula sends forth its thin films of suns? What conception of a universe, however vast and complex, can be named in mystery with man—scarce a mathematical point in size, and yet spanning earth, measuring ocean, analysing the clouds and the skies above him, poetising the dust below his feet, worshipping God, and sending out his careering thoughts into eternity, and yet, like his progenitor Adam, while aiming perpetually to be as a god, as often losing his balance, and becoming inferior to the brute? Why seek so eagerly to explore firmaments, till we have explored the depths which lie enclosed, yet beseechingly open, in our own natures? And alas! no light do all the fires of all the firmaments, however beautifully concentred and condensed by the power of poetical genius, cast upon the mystery of man's moral condition, his nature as a sinner, or the hope he has of forgiveness and everlasting life!

We take leave of this brief view of a magnificent theme, by uttering (seventhly) what may appear our most paradoxical assertion—namely, that there is no reason to believe that death and immortality will permit the emancipated soul to remain amid these present starry splendours However bright, and even, at times, inviting they may seem, they contain no home for us after we are freed from these tabernacles of clay. We often hear men talking as if, somehow, they went up, after death, among the heavenly bodies. It were wrong in us to dogmatise on any such question; but it seems more probable, and more scriptural, too, that we pass, at death, amid a purely spiritual scenery, as well as into a purely spiritual state—or, at least, that the *grosser phenomena of matter* will be then as invisible to us as are now *the microscopic worlds*. This conviction *came* upon us some two years ago, with a sudden and startling force, which we felt more than enough for our own minds. Taking up, shortly after, one of the strange reveries of poor Edgar Poe, we are astonished to find the following language: "At death, these creatures, enjoying the ultimate life—immortality, act all things, and pass every-

where by mere volition—*indwelling not the stars*, which to us seem the sole palpabilities, and for the accommodation of which we blindly deem space created—but that SPACE itself—that infinity, of which the true substantive vastness swallows up the *star shadows*—blotting them out as nonentities from the perception of the angels." And, again: "the stars, through what we consider their materiality, escape the angelic sense, just as the unparticled matter or space, through what we consider its immateriality, eludes the perception of organic and incarnate beings."

Inferences of much interest might be drawn from these cursory remarks. We might infer, for instance, as we have repeatedly said before, that there was, and is, no alternative for Man—but Revelation or Despair. Nature can, at the utmost, do little for us, and can tell us very little. This the highest of philosophers have ever felt (including some of the alchymists), and hence they have tried to *get behind nature*—and to get *so* behind it as to turn it to their will. In this they have all miserably failed; and ever shall. One only possessed this ineffable secret—one only ever stood behind the tremendous veil of creation—and why? Because he was originally divine—because he came from the Excellent Glory (which *is*, perhaps, another name for that "unparticled matter," that sublime reality of existence, which is within all things), as well as confirmed his power by "privilege of virtue." HE alone, even in the days of his flesh, with open face, looked at the Glory of GOD; and this power he gives already in some measure, and shall yet more fully bestow upon his faithful and simple-hearted followers, that they too may behold, as in a glass—mightier than the mirror of all the stars—the inmost glory of the Lord.

Once more, how overwhelmingly grand the views opened up by such thoughts as these! Here are new heavens and a new earth. Here, in every death, is a rehearsal of that scene in which the heavens are to flee away. The sight of those fair, yet terrible and tantalising heavens of ours is, at the death-moment of every Christian, exchanged for that of spiritual scenes, which no eye hath seen, and no ear heard. That majestic universe, which was the nursery of the budding soul, dissolves like a dream, and that soul is admitted within the veil of the unseen, and begins to behold matter *as it is*, space *as it is*, GOD *as he is*, and to know now what is the meaning of the words, "the light *inaccessible* and full of glory." Nor will the soul, thus introduced, sigh for the strange and fiery "star-shadows" which surrounded its infancy. There was much in them that was beautiful; but there was much also that was fearful, perplexing, and sad. But here, in this spirit-land, the sun of truth shines. *That* city has no need of the sun nor of the moon to shine on it. The mind shall there begin to see without cloud, or shadow, or reflected radiance, Knowledge, Essence, Eternity, GOD, and shall look back upon the stars as but the bright toys of its nursery—childish things it has surmounted and put away. Further we dare not penetrate; here let the curtain drop; but let it drop to the music of one solemn word, from the only Book which has given us authentic and commanding tidings from that inner world. "Seeing, therefore, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness?"

DR ARNOLD.

TRANSCENDENT genius cannot be dwindled except in the presence of transcendent moral worth, and, when compared to it, resembles a magnificent conflagration touched and paled by a ray direct from heaven. It is a matter of deep regret and of solemn charge against this age, that there have been not a few men

in whom the two things have been divorced, and that, in our upper ranks of intellect, there have only been a few in whom they have been combined; that while we have had Byron attended by his innumerable followers, and Moore and Shelley each with a long tail of imitators, we have had only one Arnold—one man, on the whole, worthy to be classed, in moral heroism, with the Reformers and Puritans of other times; one whose great intellect seems small in the shadow of his noble highmindedness, intellectual honesty, and admiration of all that is true, and lovely, and of a good report.

Indeed, the profound estimate formed by the majority of the public of Arnold's unequalled excellence and truth of character, has unduly lowered the prevalent opinion as to his intellect and genius. Had he been a man of less virtue, he would have seemed a man of more mental power. The opposite of this is not uncommon. Often a man of mediocre genius appears large in the lurid light of his impiety; and even one like Goethe or Byron, who actually is standing on the pinnacle of universal fame, seems a foot or two higher from the attitude of mouthing defiance he has assumed to the Most High. If a man be desperately bad, it is taken for granted, most unreasonably, that he must be desperately clever. We think that very often it is otherwise; that, in the words of old Ben Jonson, "the devil is an ass," and that those highest in virtue are, in general, highest in intellect. In Arnold, at least, we find a mind of a lofty order, united to the most sensitive of consciences, a determined will, purity of conduct, and a warm heart; a union in equal proportions of the cherub, the seraph, and the child. There, indeed, lay his peculiar merit. He had no one faculty developed in extraordinary strength, or to the detriment of others, but he had a combination of many. His intellect was clear, masculine, searching, comprehensive, and *judicial*, if not eminently original and daring. His imagination was a handmaid exactly adapted and proportioned to his intellect, of the same stature and size; and as the "eyes of a handmaid regard the hand of her mistress," so diligently and duly does Arnold's fancy hold herself in readiness to copy the example and do the bidding of his judgment, move wherever and do whatever she may. His research after truth is as slow, cautious, elaborate, as his love for truth is warm, passionate, and imperious. His learning, particularly in matters of language and criticism, is at once minute and extensive; he is fond of first making rapid eruptions into the territories of learning, and then of retracing every inch of the way, in order to perfect his knowledge, and to confirm his command. Seldom have such enthusiasm and such caution, such loyalty to instinct and such loyalty to evidence, been united in the same man. He is never rash, and he is never cold; has both head and heart, but keeps them in their proper places; and never or seldom feels with his head or ratiocinates with his heart. He was a lover at once of the Beautiful, the True, and the Holy, and to each of them he gave a due meed of homage. Regarding them as standing in the three degrees of positive, comparative, and superlative, he loved the first much, the second more, and the third most; and expressed this in the varied objects and proceedings of his life. In his travels to the Continent, and visits to Foxhow, he showed his appreciation of the Beautiful; in his historical labours, he revealed his passion for the True; and in his efforts at church reform, and at defending Christianity, as well as in the moral influences wielded by him in his school, came out his inextinguishable admiration of the Holy, and his desire to circulate that love to all mankind. There was, besides, a child-like spirit, a boy-heart, which continued to beat in him till the last, and which would have continued to beat with yet bigger and warmer throbs, had he lived to seventy, instead of expiring at the early age of forty-seven.

Before looking more specially to Arnold's life, death, and the moral of his story, let us first answer some of the objections sometimes made to his character.

He is accused first of remaining, when he might have left, a position doubly false, inasmuch as it was that of a schoolmaster, and that of a member and minister of the English Church. Nothing is more common than the canting cry which is often raised on the subject of false positions. We heard once a philosopher of this school saying of an ox, which had got into an awkward corner in a Leith steamer, where he could neither advance nor retreat, and was in the way of all the passengers, "there's a poor animal in a false position!" There are indeed men as awkwardly circumstanced as the ox, while like him they are on the way to the shambles; but very frequently, too, the cry is pure cant. How many a position apparently false is not so in reality; may seem so to the world, but may not be felt to be so by the man himself! How many a false position does a true man make true! How many a man grumbles at a false position, who, if placed in any other, would find or make it false too. We all remember Addison's "Mountain of Miseries," and what befell those who shifted their burdens. There are, of course, some trades more and others less congenial to genius, talent, and even moral honesty. A poet, perhaps, could hardly be a butcher, although Kirke White was a butcher's son; a man of extremely sensitive moral temperament would scarcely feel himself at home as a *nisi prius* lawyer; and a singularly clear-headed and withal honest man could, we fear, in few cases remain a Roman Catholic priest. Burns unquestionably was out of his place as a gauger, not so much for the lowness of the occupation, as because it brought him into constant contact with his most dangerous enemy, *aqua-vitæ*. And so, in other ways, there are, and ever have been, discrepancies between positions and powers. But what is there unfavourable to the development either of genius or of worth in such professions as farming, merchandise, physic, and still less in the ministry of any gospel church? Mr Carlyle, indeed, in his "Life of Sterling," treats every intelligent man who becomes and continues a "black dragoon" as a criminal, and actually foams at the thought of his hero Sterling spending eight months of his life in teaching the ignorant, praying with the sick, and "remembering the forgotten," in Herstmonceux. Surely, surely, he was better employed thus, than in writing what his biographer confesses to be middling poetry, and not first-rate prose, in studying the mean, disenchanting demon Strauss, or in carrying on "exceptionable talk" (as did Cain with Lucifer) with his future biographer; and grand guide from the mild twilight of Christianity, into the outer darkness of pantheistic despair. Carlyle professed to admire and love Arnold; and yet Arnold spent, not eight months, but many years, in combining the duties of a faithful preacher of the gospel with those of an ardent and devoted instructor of youth. *If* this fact has at all lowered him in the estimation of Carlyle, he has never, at least, ventured to say so. What, indeed, can be nobler than the profession of a Christian pastor, who discharges it with a due regard at once to the spirit of his office and to the spirit of his age. He may have, *must* in this century have, his doubts and difficulties, but he will discharge his duty, not worse, but better because of these; they will act at once as a check and as a spur to his motions; they will at once awe and enkindle his spirit. Whether will a man be better prepared to preach truth, who has taken it in a slump and on trust, or who has bought, wrested, torn it, inch by inch, from his own personal experience, and, in obtaining it, has been, at every step, resisted by the World, the Devil, and the Flesh? It has indeed been much the same in all ages. All great preachers of the gospel, and great writers on gospel-truth, have doubted before they believed; doubted while they believed; and doubted after they believed. Their doubts, as well as their fears, have gone with them to the pulpit-stairs, gone up with them to the pulpit, and remained wrestling, although baffled, with them there. They have believed because they have thought; and thought as inevitably produces doubt, as substance casts shadow. If every one who has theological doubts

is to abstain from preaching, why should not, on the same principle, every one who has medical, or legal, or agricultural, or commercial doubts, abstain from practising medicine, or following law, or farming, or merchandise? If, indeed, a man is convinced that religion in all its forms is an imposture and fraud, then let him beware of taking its vows upon his soul; but if he, on the other hand, feels that, with all its fearful difficulties, it is on the whole true, that it is less encumbered, moreover, with difficulty, than infidelity is, and that it is withal exerting even now a wholly unparalleled influence on the moral and spiritual nature of men, then let him not be deterred by a hundred unresolved problems from prosecuting the high calling it sets before him. Let him "give the benefit of his doubts" rather to God than to the devil! And let him do this all the more resolutely, that the very fact that he has doubted, and is pressed by doubts still, will most certainly create a prejudice against him among those numerous conventional persons who even in this age of inquiry and agitation continue to exist, and who, to alter Dr Johnson's saying, are *not* infidels, because, like dogs, they have never thought upon the subject. Let him bury in his bosom the annoyance created by the loud clamour or silent suspicion of such individuals, let him strive hard to love, pity, and pardon, instead of despising and turning to rend them—and let him look to his flanks, for verily he will soon find himself between two fires!

Dr Arnold has been accused of being an Ishmaelite; and in one sense he undoubtedly was. For there are two senses and two sides in the word Ishmaelite. There are men so constituted that they *cannot* fully agree with any party; and there are men so constituted that they *will* not agree with any party. There are, in other words, involuntary and voluntary Ishmaelites. The test for distinguishing between the two is the *spirit* which pervades their declarations of independence and insulation: the spirit of the voluntary Ishmaelite being more that of personal quarrel, and the spirit of the involuntary one being more that of public duty. Yet there are cases in which brave and honest men are stung into thorough and determined aversion to all parties, and provoked to cry, "To the wilderness, from this base and hollow arena! Hurrah for Ishmael, and his wild and lonely company!" And there are evidences that Dr Arnold, ere the close of his days, after in vain trying to agree in all that was worth agreeing with in various parties, came at last to the resolution to stand alone, saying, with Luther, "Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise; so help me God." A man who thus proclaims himself single must be also strong. Arnold felt himself strong, but did not take this solitary position solely from consciousness of strength, but far more from a sense of duty. He tried first to think well of, and to "find himself," as the Germans say, in, various parties, but in vain. The Evangelicals were too narrow and too fanatical for him; the High Church party were too papistical; the Liberals were too secularistic: one party loved truth to the exclusion of beauty and holiness; another, beauty to the exclusion of holiness and truth; and a third, holiness, to the exclusion of truth and beauty: and as he loved all three in divers proportions, he felt himself unable to sympathise fully with any of these fragmentary parties, and consequently retired, like an old Covenanter, to the desert, and, like him, carried along with him his *Bible and his sword*. To do this, cost him many a pang, and was indeed the misery of his life. Some Ishmaelites thrive and fatten on their solitude and insulation; but Arnold died in his. This was the real *angina pectoris* which broke his heart and hurried him to a premature grave. He could not be holy and honourable in close connection or identification of himself with any party; and he could not be happy alone, but preferred to die under the burden of conscientious solitude, rather than to live as the man of crowds, which he was unable to endure, "infamous and contented."

No sooner, however, had he departed, than there arose a kind of scramble for or about his remains—a fight as if over

the dead body of Patroclus again. Some of the evangelical party sought to claim him as substantially theirs; while others repudiated his doctrines as neologistic, although admitting his life to be Christian. Others contended that the fact that he continued in the Church to the last was itself a strong argument in favour of an establishment; while dissenters thought that a mind so enlightened must by and by have come round to their side of the question. But especially the sceptical party were positive that he was, if not secretly on their side, yet at least on the highway to a junction, and they seemed indignant at Death for cutting him off ere it could be effected. We cannot, of course, say dogmatically how Arnold's notions might have been modified by further investigation, or by the pressure of peculiar circumstances; but we are inclined to believe that he would not—could not—durst not—have turned aside with either of the Newmans in those strange paths into which they have diverged. Our whole soul shudders at the thought of him, the profound worshipper of the Man Christ Jesus, sanctioning the odious and cold-blooded blasphemy of the chapter on the "Moral Character of Christ;" and can fancy him flinging the book from him in indignation and horror, as breathing the very inspiration of the Evil One. Nor could he, we think, have become a Straussite. Indeed, before he died, his penetrating eye saw through the hollowness of that theory which misled poor weak Sterling; and he talks of Strauss contemptuously as a caricature of Niebuhr. Nor do we think that Carlyle could have taught him how to curse, or that he would have exchanged the feet of the apostle whom Jesus loved, for those of the apostle who hates Jesus. Popery is an even less likely alternative. Nor can we think that his clear and manly intellect would have been satisfied with those shadowy abstractions—bloodless, brainless, lifeless —which Maurice and his school propose to substitute for the warm and substantial facts and principles of Christianity.

Vain, however, are all such speculations. If Arnold's position was in some degree false—if he felt himself uneasy in the bosom of the Church of England—if his piety was labouring in fight with deep and growing doubts, the position, the uneasiness and the contest, came speedily to an eternal close, and God's merciful providence allowed him to die as he had lived, a liberal, yet devout believer—a highminded, yet humble and honest man; and who would not be ready to exclaim, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Dr Arnold must now be regarded more particularly as a teacher, writer, correspondent, controversialist, scholar, theologian, and man. Many have grudged his devotion to the trade of teaching; and had teaching been with him a mere trade, we should have grudged it too. But teaching, in his hands, and in his hands alone, rose to the measure and stature of a sublime art—we had almost said of a divine science. The three grand elements of his system seemed to consist of—Development, Diversification, and Sanctification. He felt that a true teacher is called on, not to force or cram the mind or the memory of his pupils, but to watch and to assist that mind's own development; to find out what is the main stream of tendency in each; and, instead of resisting, or crushing it into another channel, to direct and modify it as it flows on in its own; is called, too, to train a mind as a whole, and not to protrude or pamper any particular part; to feed it not with sweets or with sours exclusively, but with a genial and manly diet, knowing that whatever tends to strengthen the whole system, acts on all its parts, just as if you wish to increase the clearness and beauty of a child's eye, you do not, if it be in health, apply to the orb eye-salve, but nourish the general strength by proper exercise and food. No one felt better than Arnold that, in a physical and mental point of view, "great is nature, and it shall prevail:" while no one, on the other hand, felt more than he the native impotence and moral insanity of man as a spiritual being. To make the oak a full-grown oak, the rose a full-blown rose, and the thistle,

even, the best of conceivable thistles, he felt it, as a mental cultivator, to be his duty; not to make the rose as sturdy as the oak, or the oak to bear rose-leaves, or the thistle to become a violet. This task he felt above him, without at least the aid of a Higher Power; to do the best with his scholars, by teaching them to evolve most fully the faculties of their own minds, was his aim in teaching.

Another principle of his system we have called Diversification, and it was closely connected with the former. Knowing that man is a whole, and that this whole consists of very various parts, he applied to the minds of his pupils a diversified culture. He did this partly by enlarging the catalogue of useful studies, and partly by widening the sphere of one or two. He saw, and he made his pupils see, the universal in the particular. Greek and Latin ceased in his hands to be the narrow and dead studies which they had long been considered. Their horizon, as it were, opened indefinitely, and as it widened, so it cleared and brightened. The Greek language became a living language, and the splendid mirror of the Grecian genius. The Greek grammar became the key to universal grammar. The Greek history became a creek communicating with the great ocean of universal story. To the illustration of the Greek and Latin tongues, he brought his extensive and varied knowledge of modern languages and literatures, and all the stores which he gathered from intercourse with living men of note, and from frequent excursions to foreign countries. He thus was enabled to throw fine shifting lights on the old pages of Homer, Æschylus, and Virgil. To the explanation, again, of such writers as Thucydides and Polybius, he brought the assistance of modern systems of geography and of political philosophy, and upon them, in their turn, he reflected a radiance from the profound and aboriginal thought and speculation of some of these ancient historians, bringing the Past and the Present into thorough *rapport* with each other. His scholars consequently left the seminary, not musty and dim-eyed pedants, prematurely yellowed among ancient tomes, and staring like owls at the movements of modern society, seeking, perhaps, to cultivate their estates after the rules of husbandry laid down in the Georgics, or trying all poetry by the principles of the Stagyrite—but clear-headed and wise youths, knowing beforehand much of the world into which they were entering, and instructed how to apply the general principles gathered from a wide survey of man as a whole, and from universal history, to the particular cases, and the special, moral, literary, political, or religious questions of the day.

But the main principle which pervaded Arnold's teaching was the third we have enumerated. He sought, above all the teachers that ever lived, to baptise and sanctify instruction. He did not seek to *extract*, the Christian element from all things—for he knew there were many things where it was not to be found—but he sought to *infuse* it into all subjects of thought. He, as it were, hung up the high ideal furnished by Christianity beside all sciences, studies, and philosophies, and tried to reflect on them an illumination from it. He first tested, and then tried to conform everything to the standard of the Cross. He did not, however, apply this standard at all in a narrow or conventional spirit. He was no savage iconoclast, smiting down all that was splendid, beautiful, and great in the Grecian schools, the Roman literature, or in the genius and learning of after-times, and presenting the mutilated fragments as an offering to the Crucified. He admitted all excellence, all beauty, and all virtue, wherever he found them, even although they grew not in that garden which surrounded the Redeemer's grave. But he was aware of a higher excellence, a severer beauty, and a virtue purer, loveher, diviner far. He felt that the Gospel was from heaven, in a sense quite peculiar, and that all other influences and inspirations, without it, were defective. He looked, therefore, and taught his pupils to look, at classical authors, and at the varied studies of philosophy, history, and science, through a

Christian medium. As in Periodical Literature he desiderated one which should treat secular subjects in a Christian spirit, so in his tuition he sought to colour all subjects with the light of Calvary, and his motto was—"God in History, in Science, in Literature, in everything." His pupils, he felt, had not only intellects to be instructed, but consciences to be quickened, principles to be fixed, souls to be saved; and he was never satisfied till he had brought them under the awe and the charm, the sublime lights and shadows, of the religion of Jesus—the "powers of the world to come." The effects, in many instances, were commensurate with his zealous endeavours. Here, said they, is a great liberal mind; a mind thoroughly up to the age—believing, and living and labouring to convince us of Christianity; is it not like a new "Epistle" from heaven in support of its truth? Let us draw near and study it more closely, since a man like Arnold thinks it a reality, not a sham—nay, the reality of the earth. How we may now vainly wish that such boys as Byron and Shelley had been trained under a man like Arnold, who would have distinguished, and taught them to distinguish, between Churchism and Christianity, and who, while his talents and learning challenged their admiration, would have secured their respect and love by his moral earnestness, deep-hearted zeal, and child-like simplicity! How differently they were trained at the Harrows and Etons of their day, and what splendid wrecks, sucking down others in the gulf, and becoming the centres and causes of a thousand other shipwrecks, need not be told.

Arnold saw in his teaching one thing very plainly—the necessity of cultivating the imagination more than the judgment of boys; and this he considered almost a part of religious training. He deplored exceedingly the unimaginative character of the minds of the majority of boys, whom he found compounds of worldly shrewdness and sensuality, and traced to this, in a great measure, the low infidelity into which the young of the age are so easily precipitated. While he did not neglect to cultivate the understanding, he paid on principle more attention to the elimination of whatever imaginative power was in the mind, as well as to the proper culture of the heart. He felt that, next to piety, imagination and heart are the divinest, and at the same time the rarest, faculties of human nature; rare, at least, in their loftier degrees, but even in their lowest susceptible of far more culture than they usually receive. Those who fancy Arnold to have been a grim Scotch *dominie*, great on longs and shorts, and looking more to the letter, which killeth, than to the spirit of his authors, which giveth life, are greatly mistaken. Never was there a more genial commentator on the Greek or Latin poets, whom he loved to illustrate by copious comparisons with modern writers. Never was there one who delighted more in throwing the "purple light" of imagination upon the dry details of history, and the cold abstractions of metaphysics. He took every opportunity, too, of denouncing the "profit-and-loss" principles of morality, the cold and secularistic logic, and all that dreary commonplace *prose* of thinking and acting which abound in and disenchant the world. He tried to get his pupils to say of the earth and heavens, "How dreadful is this place;" and to realise not only the presence of God, and of those eternal laws which make it solemn to be here, but those fine fancies and illusions of imagination, which are also in a sense realities, and which make it pleasant and good to be here. He would rather have had his pupils superstitious than sensual, to believe in ghosts rather than to believe in nothing except themselves. Rather than science should reduce the universe, in the thought of any, to a mass of "cold material laws," he would have preferred some of the old superstitions of infancy to return—the rainbow to be again the Bridge of Angels; the sun again to wheel round the earth; the night again, as it darkened, to let loose the ghosts and the fairies; "gay creatures of the elements" again to play in the plighted clouds; and the stars again to become the umpires of human fate—the fiery

hieroglyphics of Destiny written on the wall of heaven's banqueting-room. But he did not feel himself necessitated to either of these alternatives. He knew a method of retaining and combining scientific and historic truth with poetic beauty, and that "given the power of imagination in the mind, properly cultivated," then no object presented to it can remain common or unclean, and no theory can avoid transfiguration. And just as his friend Wordsworth extracted poetry from brown moors, and birds' nests, and molehills, so Arnold managed to shed the "light of imagination" upon the dry geographical details of Polybius, and the crabbed political speeches of Thucydides. On that schoolfloor, as on a battle-field, he thought himself planted to fight the battle of imagination, feeling, and the fear of the Unseen God, against the materialistic tendencies of this age; and nobly did he sustain the struggle.

We come to him as a writer. Here his qualities were sufficiently obvious. Manly health of sentiment, clear distinct logic, strong rather than glowing description, a style natural, nervous, and totally free from affectation or mannerism, and a transparent honesty and characteristic candour, are the leading features of his works. Hardly the Hannibal of history, or equal in power to Tacitus or Gibbon, he was yet in love of truth, and often, in picturesque writing, a worthy narrator of the noble events, and describer of the grand characters, he felt himself attracted by. Careful, inquisitive, stern, he is at the same time bold, graphic, and enthusiastic. Next to the high moral purpose of his historical works—that clear course with which, like an Abdiel, he cleaves his solitary way, "faithful found among the faithless, faithful only he"—we like the descriptions of natural objects which he interposes amidst the disquisitions and narratives of his books. He breathes more freely, he sets up his "rest and be thankful" when he comes to the glens and uplands of the Samnite country, and his hero scarce exulted more when he reached the summit of the Alps, and saw Italy below, than does his historian. He describes scenes which war is soon to blacken and devastate, in colours so lovely, that you are reminded of the ancient victim adorned with its sacrificial glories, and are almost tempted to exclaim, "Spare, oh spare it!" The green of nature thus perpetually interposed, adds often inexpressible softness and shading to the blood and the bustle all around. "How I thirst for Zama," says he, in one of his letters. There spoke the genuine historian! He panted to be present at that decisive field, as if he had some deep personal interest pending there. It is thus that all historians should go to their work—thirsting for the crises and the conflicts they are to describe—for their Waterloos, Almas, and Inkermanns. The historian of war should, like the war-horse in Job, "smell the battle afar off, the thunder of the captains, and the shouting."

Arnold's history is somewhat lessened in interest by its plan—a plan which compels him to be "nothing, if not critical." Hence we have too much dissertation, too many "therefores," "buts," and "unlesses," interposed amidst his narrative and his descriptions. But you always have the conviction that your author is dealing fairly with you and with his subject, and always recognise his pervading purpose, which is, to show the divine plans which interpenetrate all human story, and to show, as we have hinted above, although with a far deeper insight than D'Aubigne, "God in history." Thomas Carlyle professes to do so too; but, as he knows of no personal God, and does not believe in a divine Father, his histories become only powerful illustrations of certain mechanical laws, through which it comes about that so much crime is sure, sooner or later, to receive so much punishment; just as, if you sow tares, you may expect to reap tares at harvest-time; although he never explains how it happens that these laws are administered so faithfully and punctually in the absence of a legislator, and how man has learned to commit crime at all—not to speak of the thousand other difficulties which beset his godless and hopeless theory. Arnold, on the other hand, see-

ing in history a Father's will developing itself, feels ever safe and confident that all is right; that the clouds veiling love are themselves love, or that, at least, the evil and suffering which are in the world are overruled, controlled, and managed by one almighty and merciful Mind, who shall yet in his own time and way bring them to an eternal close. How different this from Carlyle's notions! He believes in great general judgments without a Judge, and scarcely in rewards at all. By transferring eternity and infinity to the universe, and by proclaiming its laws immutable, he reduces man to despair—things, at least, are never *likely* to be better—and man is to wait, like a traveller, at some mighty western stream, till the waters of Orellana or St Lawrence dry up and allow him to cross! Perish a theory which, to use its father's own words applied to one infinitely less hopeless, might lead to an act of "universal simultaneous suicide, and a giving up of this earth as a bad job."

Arnold, had he lived, would unquestionably have developed his ideal of historical writing in a more thorough style, and on a larger scale. What a pity he did not spend more of his short life in historical writing, and that he did spend so much of it in controversy! Yet, as a controversialist, too, he had great and peculiar merit, and did a good and needful work. Here, as in all his varied tasks, he brought Christian principle to bear. It was the battle of Christianity that he fought. Whether he engaged in political discussion, or advocated church reform, or sought to check the current of Puseyism, he never allowed himself to be influenced either by party or by personal motives. He had no personal enmities, and to party, and the spirit of party, he was an avowed opponent. When he wished to be "down into Oxford to fight the Judaisers, as in a saw-pit," he spoke all in honour, and not in hate. When he smote them, it was with the steel of a Brutus, and from the stroke he rose "refulgent" in the purity of the motive that dictated the blow, as well as in the strength and courage which wielded the brand. It is refreshing, in an age distinguished by the fierce *animus* and disgusting personalities which have mingled with its literary and religious controversies, and in which many of our greatest have been most to blame, to come upon Arnold's controversial writings, and to find the dignified abstinence from all personal or irritating allusions, which is not less remarkable than the vehemence, the zeal, and the earnestness with which he denounces what he deems error, and defends what he conceives to be the truth. Seldom has controversy been pled, with a union so complete and admirable of the spirit of the gentleman and that of the Christian. Some of his controversial writings, it is true, gave great offence when first published, but this arose from the quantity of wholesome, albeit repulsive, truth they contained, from their thoroughly independent spirit, from their exposure of conventional abuses and shams, and not from anything offensive in their tone or language. His writings are, it must be confessed, from this very dignity of manner, far less stimulating than the fierce diatribes of Warburton, the haughty and scornful invectives of Horsley, the winged shafts, dipped in the blood of the Lernaean hydra, which came from the quiver of Burke, or even than the vigorous party-polemics of Philpotts of Exeter; they lack, too, that sharp trenchant logic, that brilliant wit, and that matchless irony, which render Henry Rogers the most delightful and the most formidable of opponents—tickling his enemies to death, and smothering them in the most delicate essences; but, in manhood of thought, sincerity of spirit, command of learning, and clear strong language, they yield to none.

We know not but Arnold's correspondence discovers his powers more fully and fairly than any of his regular and laboured writings. It is the still, strong aroma of his mind. It has no effort, no elaborate ease either: it is just his daily thought, daily feeling, and daily experience, transferred to his every-day page. It constitutes, besides, a clear, acute, and vigorous running commentary upon the events, political and religious, of a most stirring

and excited period. And what can be more delightful than his allusions to his happy domestic circumstances—his pantings for Foxhow—his visits to that nook of beauty and repose—his returns to Rugby, the "temple of industrious peace"—his bathing and spearing pastimes—and his excursions to the Continent, so graphically detailed! If Providence did allot him more labour, more suffering, and more anxiety than usually fall to the fate of man, it also mingled many drops of the sweetest and purest pleasure in his cup. If his agonies were the sublime and vicarious agonies of a martyr and a hero, his enjoyments to the last were those of an innocent and happy child. How he revelled in nature, in its simplest and in its grandest forms—in the sight of the groves around Oxford, and of the mighty Alpine forests—in the murmur of the Rotha, and in the old psalm which the Rhine has sung for ages to the ear of Europe—in the green swells of the English Lake Country, and in the hoary summits of Switzerland! A catholic taste is valuable in all departments of thought and study, but especially in the study and love of nature. How many show as great narrowness in their judgment of the works of nature, as in their judgment of the works of art! Perhaps they relish the sight of a green field or meadow, with a still stream giving it a quiet and scarce perceptible animation, but care nothing for a bare, bold mountain, with the severe glory of heather bathing its sides, and a loud, swift torrent wailing in torment at its base; or perhaps they relish the spectacle of a lonely Highland glen, with its waste leagues of bracken and moss, but can see no beauty in an "English lawn, shaven by the scythe and smoothed by the roller;" or perhaps they love the large, calm, alluvial river, but see only terror and tempest in the mighty ocean, with its treacherous smiles, and the tremendous secrets it encloses in its bosom; or, perhaps, while the sea completely satisfies their imagination, "sheathing it as a sword," they despise the "one meek streamlet, only one," ploughing up its solitary glen for evermore. This diversity of taste is accounted for, partly from constitutional and complexional causes, and partly from the influences of early scenery upon the taste and associations. Arnold is one of the few who have surmounted all such idiosyncrasies, and taught himself in nature, as well as in morals, in man, and in literature, to love all that is lovely, to be satisfied by all that is complete, to be soothed by all that is soft and gentle, to be stirred by all that is picturesque, and to be wonder-struck and overwhelmed by all that is sublime, terrible, and suggestive of the Infinite. De Quincey somewhere says, that, in general, the admiration of nature is a piecé of affectation—a mere mode and fashion; but assuredly this was not the case with Arnold. He had not, probably, that peculiar construction of the eye, which the same writer ascribes to Wordsworth, which made nature seem more beautiful than she is, and anticipated the transfiguration robes she is to wear in a "milder day," but he had the command of what we are persuaded to be the master-key to many of nature's fairest secrets—he had the purest and loftiest of moral natures: he had a heart of the finest mould, and, without this, ever genius is half-blind when contemplating the universe. We do not refer to those mystical "divine meanings" which Ruskin and others of his school have found, or fancied they have found, in nature; we refer to nature as, in general, a reflector of the moods and feelings of the human soul. How true Coleridge's words about nature—

> "Oh, lady, *we receive but what we give:*
> *Ours* is her luminous vesture, *ours* her shroud."

To the dull man, the brightest day is dull; to the sick man, the sun seems an invalid; the unhappy man walks amidst the most splendid scenery as through a gorgeous pandemonium; and, on the other hand, how lovely looks nature, how clear, clean, and purged, as well as magnificent, are the sun and stars, to one who is pure in life, and a Christian at heart. As he walks through the universe, he showers

beauty and purity upon all objects, and they seem what in reality they are not. The beauty or the deformity of all matter is, on the whole, illusion; and whether it appears beautiful or deformed, depends entirely on the mind. When the mind, therefore, like that of Arnold, although anxious and troubled about the state of society, is at peace with itself and with its God, then nature becomes invested with primeval beauty and grandeur—appears, it may be, a "pensive," but a "happy place," and the light of the Foreworld of the Golden Age seems to blend with that of the millennial glory on the landscapes of the world. Who has not sometimes, by rising early, and passing through a magnificent hill-country, when the "morning was spreading itself upon the mountains"—one peak catching from another the fresh and flying light of dawn, and when the dews were sparkling on the heather and the greensward, and the bright mist rising from the watercourses—snatched a pleasure of the most exquisite intensity from the hand of nature? And who continues not to cherish the memory of such morning transfigurations in the inmost recesses of his soul? Such joys were common in the history of the vacations of Arnold; and the account of them constitutes a large portion of the substance and the charm of his correspondence and his journals. Nay, a permanent although inferior degree of the same light seemed always, to his anointed and anointing eye, to lie upon the great shows of the universe; and he might say, that not only the "clouds," but the mountains, the cataracts, and the woods,

> "Were touch'd,
> And in their silent faces did he read
> Unutterable love."

We come now to a very important and interesting phase of Arnold's character, on which, however, we must be brief—his religion and theology. Apart from any peculiar systems of doctrine and creed, Arnold was essentially a religious man. He was full of the warmest and most child-like trust in and love to God, of compassion and sympathy with man, and of deep admiration and profound belief in Christianity as a whole. His religion was modelled less on the Prophets and Paul, than on John and Jesus. He had less of the Jew than of the Christian—less sympathy with Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, standing on their volcanic mountain-peaks, and tossing flakes of fire on the cities and empires of God's wrath below, or leaning, like Danger, "on a loose rock half-asleep," and dreaming gigantic visions of the future, than with the meek and sandalled Apostles, burning with love, and carrying the Cross from village to village, and house to house. In one point he shows, in a very peculiar manner, the spirit of the gospel: we refer to his interest in the poor, and his anxiety to get them to realise Christianity as the greatest boon ever conferred on them. It was in the spirit of this purpose that he projected—what a Christian Cobbett could alone have executed fully—a periodical expressly adapted for the lower classes, and seeking, by plain language and simple statements, to commend sound political and sound moral and religious principles to their acceptation.

His theology, as apart from his religion, was liberal, enlightened, and progressive, rather than strictly orthodox. His notions on the great question of Inspiration, which he thought, indeed, the greatest question stirred in the Christian Church for many an age, were unsettled and transitional. He saw, like all sensible men, that there is a human as well as a divine element in the Word of God, and that the problem is to settle and adjust the proportions of the one to the other. To the solution of this problem we think he could have done much, but occupation in other regions prevented him from doing almost anything. He was qualified for the task, alike from his loyalty to the Bible, and from his loyalty to Truth. He loved and honoured the Scriptures too much, and was too thoroughly persuaded of their peculiar divinity, to be staggered by minute discrepancies and apparent contradictions. He saw that he might admit these to exist, and yet place the most thorough confi-

dence in the general character of the documents where they are found. He thought too well of the Bible to defend it by weak arguments, or on dubious and indefensible ground. He looked at it, and at the system which it teaches, not with a microscopic eye to find out petty faults, nor with a superstitious eye unduly magnifying every "if" and "and," every tittle of the letter, every bell on the high-priest's garment, but as wholes, and with a wide, calm, general view. Was not the light from heaven, although some of the rays, by coming in contact with an earthly atmosphere, were refracted out of their course, and appeared bent to the eye? Was not, in other words, Christianity a divine system, although necessarily subject in its communication to the imperfections of the earthly *media* through which it streamed on the minds of men? "On this hint," Arnold, had he addressed himself to the task, would have spoken, and, so doing, must have conferred a most important service to the Christian Church. Bibliolatry and Straussism would both have shrank up and withered at his glance.

He saw and protested against many other evils in the Church, besides its want of a proper theory of Inspiration. He deplored the want of vital force in many of its movements—the aristocratic or flunkey spirit, which in the Establishments takes the shape of deference to rank and fashion, and among Dissenters too often worships respectability and riches—the currents which are carrying away so many either to a bastard Popery, or to a pretendedly liberal and genial, but in reality a cold-hearted and hard-featured, Rationalism—and the sad want of a proper understanding, and even an approximate union, between our present shapes of religion and the *true* sciences, literatures, and philosophies of the age. Over these phenomena he mourned with deep and permanent sorrow, as one is in heaviness for a first-born, but, at the same time, set himself with all his might to counteract them. He tried, as we have seen, to get the vitality of Christianity infused into the minds of his pupils. He tried to raise the poor up to the level of the ideal of Christianity, and to get the upper and intellectual classes to feel a deeper interest in those "poor dumb mouths"—those suffering masses who bear the burden of this community, and have little but beating for their pains. He stood on no terms with the silly pride and meretricious pomp of our clerical dignitaries. He set himself to stem, with one hand, the tide of scepticism, particularly as it was finding its way into the cottages of the humble; and, with the other, to arrest that cowardly retreat to Rome which has been commenced by our aristocracy. And he sought to bring Christianity and genuine literature, science and philosophy, nearer to one another, and to interpose between them a softer medium. We think, at the same time, that there were certain vital deficiencies in Arnold's church and theological views. He did not see, what appears to us, the deep and awful root of many of the evils of the church—a root we name not now. He did not see, besides the enormous mischiefs which have sprung from this root, the lame help which the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, has, in the absence of her Husband (an absence protracted on account of this and other infidelities), accepted from the godless kingdoms of this world. His idea of a church, although differing in some points from that of Coleridge, was equally with it a vision of the night—a dream that never has been, and never shall be, realised. His views of prophecy, on the other hand, were, it seems to us, far less comprehensive, systematic, and magnificent, than those of Coleridge; and his explication of French Revolutions, Reform Bills, and so forth, as "comings of the Lord," in the scriptural sense of that term, is too laughable almost to be mentioned. On the whole, his greatest merit as a theologian lay less in any distinct contribution to the science, or in any service he did by saving a few from Puseyism and a few from infidelity, than the example he has set, to a church and world full of intellectual cowardice, cant, and toadyism, as well as of scepticism, fierce denial, and deep uncertainty, of manly independence of

thought, of a passion for truth, of a sincere reverence for the Word of God, blended with a liberal and wide-minded appreciation of the Good and the Beautiful, the Honest and the True, wherever he found them.

Ages may elapse ere men see a soul like his wrestling, suffering, falling, triumphing, on this weary earth again; ere we shall see a mind at once so enlightened and so pious, so progressive and so Christian, as that of Arnold. He did not reach that Zama after which he thirsted; he reached first the last of his own fields. He had wound up his labours for the season; he had, on the verge of what to him was a long vacation, retired to rest; he awoke with the death-pang in his vitals, and in a few hours was no more. From that "temple of industrious peace," from that school where he had moulded, and was moulding, the minds of England's children, from the circle of a beloved family, and from an unfinished series of noble literary, moral, and theological works, he passed—shall we say, "he was not, for God took him." It was somehow severely fitting that a death so sharp and sudden should befall the most Roman of moderns, and one of the most Christian of men.

Arnold reminds us of Foster, although the points of difference were as obvious as those of agreement. He had not, we think, equal power of genius—not the same virgin wealth and absolute originality of mind, although in culture and scholarship he was greatly superior. Both were surrounded by an atmosphere of melancholy thought, but that of Arnold was mingled with milder and gentler elements: both were Christians, although both entertained peculiar views of Christianity; but Arnold's form of faith was, if not more enlightened, much more practical than Foster's. Foster was indolent: he lay, a lazy Titan upon the mountain-top, now enjoying the prospect, now swaddling himself in the mists, now frowning at the little things and little men beneath, and now playing on his Pan-pipe snatches of a powerful but plaintive melody; Arnold came down to the valley, mingled with the crowd, and stripped himself to the most arduous toils.

Altogether, we close Arnold's history with a mixture of feelings, in which the pathetic, the pleasurable, and the moral-sublime, are inextricably blended. It is, on the whole, a tragedy, but one of the noblest and least painful of tragedies. Say, rather, his life was a dim-lit but gorgeous temple, in which we tread as on holy ground, and feel what poor things literature and scholarship are, when compared with the elevations of moral excellence, the beauties of holiness, the clear, naked grandeurs of truth, the dignities of highminded honesty, and of courage which "never feared the face of man."

HENRY ROGERS.

Mr Rogers has only risen of late into universal reputation, although he had long ago deserved it. It has fared with him as with some others who had for many years enjoyed a dubious and struggling, although real and rising fame, till some signal hit, some "Song of the Shirt," or "Eclipse of Faith," introduced their names to millions who never heard of them before, and turned suddenly on their half-shadowed faces the broadest glare of fame. Thus, thousands upon thousands who had never heard of Hood's "Progress of Cant," or his "Comic Annuals," so soon as they read the "Song of the Shirt," inquired eagerly for him, and began to read his earlier works. And so, although literary men were aware of Mr Rogers's existence, and that he was an able contributor to the "Edinburgh

Review," the general public knew not even his name till the "Eclipse of Faith" appeared, and till its great popularity excited a desire to become acquainted with his previous lucubrations. We met with the "Eclipse of Faith" at its first appearance, but have only newly risen from reading his collected articles, and propose to record our impressions while they are yet fresh and warm.

Henry Rogers, as a reviewer and writer, seems to think that he belongs to the school of Jeffrey and Macaulay, although possessed of more learning and imagination than either, of a higher moral sense and manlier power than the first, and of a freer diction and an easier vein of wit than the second; and the style of deference and idolatry he uses to them and to Mackintosh, might almost to his detractors appear either shameful from its hypocrisy, ludicrous from its affectation, or silly from the ignorance it discovers of his own claims and comparative merits. We defy any unprejudiced man to read the two volumes he has reprinted from the "Edinburgh Review," and not to feel that he has encountered, on the whole, the most accomplished, manliest, healthiest, and most Christian writer who ever adorned that celebrated periodical. If he has contributed to its pages no one article equal in brilliance to Jeffrey's papers on Alison and Swift, or to Macaulay's papers on Milton and Warren Hastings, his papers, taken *en masse*, are more natural, less laboured, full of a richer and more recondite learning, and written in a more conversational, more vigorous, and more thoroughly English style. His thought, too, is of a profounder, and, at the same time, clearer cast. Jeffrey had the subtlety of the lawyer, rather than the depth of the philosopher. Macaulay thinks generally like an eloquent special pleader. Henry Rogers is a candid, powerful, and all-sided thinker, and one who has fed his thought by a culture as diversified as it is deep. He is a scholar, a mathematician, a philosopher, a philologist, a man of taste and *virtu*, a divine, and a wit, and if not absolutely a poet, yet he verges often on poetical conception, and his free and fervid eloquence often kindles into the fire of poetry.

Every one who has read the "Eclipse of Faith"—and who has not?—must remember how that remarkable work has collected all these varied powers and acquisitions into one burning focus, and must be ready to grant that, since Pascal, no knight has entered into the arena of religious controversy better equipped for fight, in strength of argument, in quickness of perception, in readiness and richness of resource, in command of temper, in pungency of wit, in a sarcasm which "burns frore" with the intense coolness of its severity, and in a species of Socratic dialogue which the son of Sophroniscus himself would have envied. But, as the public and the press generally have made up their minds upon all these points, as also on the merits of his admirable "Defence," and have hailed the author with acclamation, we prefer to take up his less known preceding efforts in the "Edinburgh Review," and to bring their merits before our readers, while, at the same time, we hope to find metal even more attractive in the great names and subjects on which we shall necessarily be led to touch, as, under Mr Rogers's guidance, we pursue our way. We long, too, shall we say, to break a lance here and there with so distinguished a champion, although assuredly it shall be all in honour, and not in hate.

From his political papers we abstain, and propose to confine ourselves to those on letters and philosophy. His first, and one of his most delightful papers, is on quaint old Thomas Fuller. It reminds us much of a brilliant paper on Sir Thomas Browne, contributed to the same journal, we understand, by Bulwer. Browne and Fuller were kindred spirits, being both poets among wits, and wits among poets. In Browne, however, imagination and serious thought rather preponderate, while wit unquestionably is, if not Fuller's principal faculty, the faculty he exercises most frequently, and with greatest delight. Some authors have wit and imagination in equal quantities, and it is their tempera-

ment which determines the question, which of the two they shall specially use or cultivate. Thus, Butler of "Hudibras" had genuine imagination as well as prodigious wit, and, had he been a Puritan instead of a Cavalier; he might have indited noble serious poetry. Browne, again, was of a pensive, although not sombre disposition, and hence his "Urn-burial" and "Religio Medici" are grave and imaginative, although not devoid of quaint, queer fancies and arabesque devices, which force you to smile. Fuller, on the other hand, was of a sanguine, happy, easy temperament, a jolly Protestant father confessor, and this attracted him to the side of the laughing muse. Yet he abounds in quiet, beautiful touches both of poetry and pathos. Burke had, according to Mr Rogers, little or no wit, although possessing a boundless profusion of imagery. To this we demur. His description of Lord Chatham's motley cabinet; his picture, in the "Regicide Peace," of the French ambassador in London; his description of those "who are emptied of their natural bowels, and stuffed with the blurred sheets of the 'Rights of Man;'" his famous comparison of the "gestation of the rabbit and the elephant;" his reply to the defence put in for Hastings, that the Hindoos had erected a temple to him ("He knew something of the Hindoo Mythology. They were in the habit of building temples not only to the gods of light and fertility, but to the demons of small-pox and murder, and he, for his part, had no objection that Mr Hastings should be admitted into such a Pantheon")—these are a few out of many proofs that he sometimes exercised that high species of wit which is impregnated with imagination. But the truth is, that Burke, an earnest, if not a sad-hearted man, was led by his excess of zeal to plead the causes in which he was interested in general by serious weapons, by the burning and barbed arrows of invective and imagination, rather than by the light-glancing missiles of wit and humour. Jeremy Taylor, with all his wealth of fancy, was restrained from wit partly by the subjects he was led through his clerical profession to treat, and partly from his temperament, which was quietly glad, rather than sanguine and mirthful. Some writers, again, we admit, and as Mr Rogers repeatedly shows, vibrate between wit and the most melancholy seriousness of thought; the scale of their spirits, as it rises or sinks, either lifts them up to piercing laughter, or depresses them to thoughts too deep and sad for tears. It was so with Plato, with Pascal, with Hood, and is so, we suspect, with our author himself. Shakspere, perhaps, alone of writers, while possessing wit and imaginative wisdom to the same prodigious degree, has managed to adjust them to each other, never allowing either the one or the other unduly to preponderate, but uniting them into that consummate whole, which has become the admiration, the wonder, and the despair of the world.

Mr. Rogers, alluding to the astonishing illustrative powers of Jeremy Taylor, Burke, and Fuller, says finely, "Most marvellous and enviable is that fecundity of fancy which can adorn whatever it touches, which can invest naked fact and dry reasoning with unlooked-for beauty, make flowrets bloom even on the brow of the precipice, and, when nothing better can be had, can turn the very substance of rock itself into moss and lichens. This faculty is incomparably the most important for the vivid and attractive *exhibition* of truth to the minds of men." We quote these sentences, not merely as being true, so far as they go, but because we want afterwards to mark a special inconsistency in regard to them, which he commits in a subsequent paper.

We have long desired, and often expressed the desire, to see what we call *ideal geography*—*i. e.*, the map of the earth run over in a poetical and imaginative way, the breath of genius passing over the dry bones of the names of places, and through the link of association between places and events, characters and scenery, causing them to live. Old Fuller gives us, if not a specimen of this, something far more amusing; he gives us a geography of joke, and even from the hallowed scenery of the Holy Land he

extracts, in all reverence, matter for inextinguishable merriment. What can be better in their way than the following?—"Gilboa.—The mountain that David cursed, that neither rain nor dew should fall on it; but of late some English travellers climbing this mountain were well wetted, David not cursing it by a prophetical spirit, but in a poetic rapture. Edrei.—The city of Og, on whose giant-like proportions the rabbis have more giant-like lies. Pisgah.—Where Moses viewed the land; hereabouts the angels buried him, and also *buried the grave*, lest it should occasion idolatry." And so on he goes over each awful spot, chuckling in harmless and half-conscious glee, like a schoolboy through a *morning* churchyard, which, were it midnight, he would travel in haste, in terror, and with oft-reverted looks. It is no wish to detract from the dignity and consecration of these scenes that actuates him; it is nothing more nor less than his irresistible temperament, the boy-heart beating in his veins, and which is to beat on till death.

Down the halls of history, in like manner, Fuller skips along, laughing as he goes; and even when he pauses to moralise or to weep, the pause is momentary, and the tear which had contended during its brief existence with a sly smile, is "forgot as soon as shed." His wit is often as withering as it is quaint, although it always performs its annihilating work without asperity, and by a single touch. Hear this on the Jesuits:—"Such is the charity of the Jesuits, that they never owe any man any ill-will—making present payment thereof." Or this on Machiavel, who had said, "that he who undertakes to write a history must be of no religion;" "if so, Machiavel himself was the best qualified of any in his age to write a history." Of modest women, who nevertheless dress themselves in questionable attire, he says, "I must confess some honest women may go thus, but no whit the honester for going thus. That ship may have Castor and Pollux for the sign, which notwithstanding has St Paul for the lading." His irony, like good imagery, often becomes the short-hand of thought, and is worth a thousand arguments. The bare, bald style of the schoolmen he attributes to design, "lest any of the vermin of equivocation should hide themselves under the *nap* of their words." Some of our readers are probably smiling as they read this, and remember the DRESS of certain religious priests, not unlike the schoolmen in our day. After commenting on the old story of St Dunstan and the Devil, he cries out, in a touch of irony seldom surpassed, "But away with all suspicions and queries. None need to doubt of the truth thereof, finding it on a sign painted in Fleet Street, near Temple Bar."

In these sparkles of wit and humour, there is, we notice, not a little consciousness. He says good things, and a quiet chuckle proclaims his knowledge that they are good. But his *best* things, the fine serious fancies, which at times cross his mind, cross it unconsciously, and drop out like pearls from the lips of a *blind* fairy, who sees not their lustre, and knows not their value. Fuller's deepest wisdom is the wisdom of children, and his finest eloquence is that which seems to cross over their spotless lips, like west winds over half-opened rosebuds—breathings of the Eternal Spirit, rather than utterances of their own souls. In this respect, and in some others, he much resembled John Bunyan, to whom we wonder Rogers has not compared him. Honest John, we verily believe, thought much more of his rhymes, prefixed to the second part of the "Pilgrim's Progress," and of the little puzzles and jokes he has scattered through the work, than of his divinely artless portraiture of scenery, passions, characters, and incidents, in the course of the wondrous allegory. Mr Rogers quotes a good many of Fuller's precious prattlings; but Lamb, we think, has selected some still finer, particularly his picture of the fate of John Wickliff's ashes. Similar touches of tender, quaint, profound, and unwitting sublimity, are found nearly as profusely sprinkled as his jests and clenches through his varied works, which are quite a quarry of sense, wit, truth, pedantry, learning, quiet

poetry, ingenuity, and delightful nonsense. Rogers justly remarks, too, that, notwithstanding all the rubbish and gossip which are found in Fuller's writings, he means to be truthful always; and that, with all his quaintness and pedantry, his style is purer and more legible than that of almost any writer of his age. It is less swelling and gorgeous than Browne's, but far easier and more idiomatic; less rich, but less diffuse, than Taylor's; less cumbered with learning than Burton's; and less involved, and less darkened with intermingling and crossing beams of light, than that of Milton, whose poetry is written in the purest Grecian manner; whilst his English prose often resembles not Gothic, but Egyptian architecture, in its chaotic confusion and misproportioned magnificence.

Mr Rogers' second paper is on Andrew Marvel, and contains a very interesting account of the life, estimate of the character, and criticism of the writings of this "Aristides-Butler," if we may, in the fashion of Mirabeau, coin a combination of words, which seems not inapt, to represent the virtues of that great patriot's life, and the wit and biting sarcasm of his manner of writing. He tells the old story of his father crossing the Humber with a female friend, and perishing in the waters; but omits the most striking part of the story: how the old man, in leaving the shore, as the sky was scowling into storm, threw his staff back on the beach, and cried out, "Ho, for heaven!" The tradition of this is at least still strong in Hull. Nothing after Marvel's integrity, and his quiet, keen, caustic wit, so astonishes us as the fact that he never opened his lips in Parliament! He was "No-speech Marvel." He never got the length of Addison's "I conceive—I conceive—I conceive." There are no authentic accounts of even a "Hear, hear," issuing from his lips. What an act of self-denial in that of bad measures and bad men! How his heart must sometimes have burned, and his lips quivered, and yet the severe spirit of self-control kept him silent! What a contrast to the infinite babblement of senators in modern days! And yet, was not his very silence formidable? Did it not strike the Tories, as the figure of the moveless Mordecai at the king's gate struck the guilty Haman? There, night after night, in front of the despots, sat the silent statue-like figure, bending not to their authority, unmoveable by their threats, not to be melted by their caresses, not to be gained over by their bribes, perhaps with a quiet stern sneer resting as though sculptured upon his lips, and, doubtless, they trembled more at this dumb defiance, than at the loud-mouthed attacks and execrations of others; the more as, while others were sometimes absent, *he* was always there, a moveless pillar of patriotism, a still libel of truth, for ever glaring on their fascinated and terror-stricken eyes. Can we wonder that they are very generally supposed to have removed him from their sight, in the only way possible in the circumstances, by giving him a premature and poisoned grave?

In his third paper, Rogers approaches a mightier and more eloquent, but not a firmer or more sincere spirit than Marvel —Martin Luther. Here he puts forth all his strength, and has, we think, very nobly vindicated both Luther's intellectual and moral character. Hallam (a writer whom Rogers greatly over-estimates, before whom he falls down with "awful reverence prone," from whom he ventures to differ with "a whispered breath and bated humbleness," which seem, considering his own calibre, very laughable, yet of whose incapacity as a literary critic, and especially as a judge of poetry, he seems to have a stifled suspicion, which comes out in the paper on Fuller, whom Hallam has slighted) has underrated Luther's talents, because, forsooth, his works are inferior to his reputation. Why, what was Luther's real work? It was the Reformation. What library of Atlas folios—ay, though Shakspere had penned every line in it—could have been compared to the rending of the shroud of the Christian Church? As soon accuse an earthquake of not being so melodious in its tones as an organ, as demand artistic writings from Luther.

His burning of the Pope's Bull was, we think, and Mr Rogers thinks with us, a very respectable review. His journey to Worms was as clever as most books of travel. His marriage with Catharine Bora was not a bad epithalamium. His rendering of the Bible into good German was nearly as great a work as the "Constitutional History." Some of those winged words which he uttered against the Pope and for Christ have been called "half-battles." He held the pen very well, too, but it was only with one of his hundred arms. His *works* were his actions. Every great book is an action; and the converse is also true—every great action is a book. Cromwell, Mr Rogers says, very justly, cannot be judged by his speeches, nor Alexander. Neither, we add, could Cæsar by his "Commentaries," which, excellent as they are, develop only a small portion of the "foremost man of all this world;" nor could Frederick of Prussia by his French verses; nor could Nelson by his letters to Lady Hamilton; nor could even Hall, Chalmers, and Irving, by their orations and discourses. There is a very high, if not the highest, order of men who find literature too small a sheath for the broadsword of their genius. They come down and shrink up when they commence to write; but they make others write for them. Their deeds supply the material of ten thousand historians, novelists, and poets. We find Lord Holland, in his "Memoirs," sneering at Lord Nelson's talents, because his writings were careless and poor. Nelson did not pretend to be a writer or an orator; he pretended only to do what he did—to sweep the seas with his cannon, and be the greatest naval commander his country ever produced. Mungo Park and Ledyard were no great authors, but they were, what they wished to be, the most heroic of travellers. Danton never published a single page, but he was incomparably a greater man than Camille Desmoulins, who wrote thousands. Would it have added an inch to the colossal stature, or in any measure enhanced the lurid grandeur of Satan, had Milton ascribed to him the invention, not of fire-arms, but of the printing-press, and made him the author of a few hundred satires against Omnipotence? Channing, in his Essay on Napoleon, has contributed to the circulation of this error. He gives there a decided preference to literary over other kinds of power. But would even he have compared Brougham or Daniel Webster to Washington? It seems to us that the very highest style of merit is when the powers of action and authorship are combined in nearly equal proportions. They were so in Milton, who was as good a schoolmaster and secretary as he was an author. They were so in Bacon, who was an able, if not a just, chancellor and statesman, as well as the most richly-minded of men. Notwithstanding Mr Rogers, they were so, we think, in Napoleon, whose bulletins and speeches, though often in false taste, were often as brilliant as his battles. They were so in Burke, who was a first-rate business-man and a good farmer, as well as a great orator, statesman, and writer. They were so in Burns, who used the plough as well as he used the pen. And they were so in Scott, who was an excellent Clerk of Session, and capital agriculturist and landlord, besides being the first of all fictionists, except Cervantes, who, by the way, fought bravely at Lepanto, as well as wrote "Don Quixote." Even in Luther's case, Mr Hallam is proved by Rogers to be sufficiently harsh in his judgment. Luther's productions, occasional as most of them, and hastily written as all of them were, are not the mediocre trash which Hallam insinuates them to be. If tried by the standard of that species of literature to which they all in reality belong, they will not be found wanting. They are all letters, the shorter or longer epistles of a man greatly engrossed during his days, and who at evening dashes off his careless, multifarious, but characteristic correspondence. Mark, too, everything he wrote was sent, and sent instantly, to the press. Who would like this done in his own case? What divine, writing each week his two sermons, would care about seeing them regularly printed the next day, and dis-

persed over all the country? Who, unless he were a man of gigantic genius and fame, would not be sunk under such a process, and run to utter seed? The fact that Luther did publish so much, and did nevertheless retain his reputation, proves that, although much which he wrote must have been unworthy of his genius, yet, as a whole, his writings were characteristic of his powers, and contributed to the working out of his purpose. They were addressed, Mr Rogers justly says, chiefly to the people, and many of his strangest and strongest expressions were uttered on plan. His motto, like Danton's, was, "to dare, and to dare, and to dare." He felt that a timid reformer, like a timid revolutionist, is lost, and that a lofty tone, whether in bad or good taste, was essential to the success of his cause. Even as they are, his writings contain much "lion's marrow," stern truth, expressed in easy, homespun language, savage invective, richly deserved, and much of that noble scorn with which a brave, honest man is ever fond of blowing away, as through snorting nostrils, those sophistries, evasions, and meannesses in controversy, which are beneath argument, baffle logical exposure, and which can only be reached by contempt. Add to all this the traditionary reputation of his eloquence, and those burning coals from that great conflagration which have come down to us uncooled. For our parts, we had rather possess the renown of uttering some of these, than have written all Chillingworth's and Barrow's controversial works. Think of that sentence which he pronounced over the Bull as he burned it, surely one of the most sublime and terrible that ever came from human lips:—"As thou hast troubled and put to shame the Holy One of the Lord, so be thou troubled and consumed in eternal fires of hell;" or that at Worms —"Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise: God help me." Such sentences soar above all the reaches of rhetoric, of oratory, even of poetry, and rank in grandeur with the great naked abstractions of eternal truth. They thrill not the taste, nor the passions, nor the fancy, but the soul itself. And yet they were common on the lips of Luther the lion-hearted—the

"Solitary monk that shook the world."

Mr Rogers, besides, culls several passages from his familiar epistles, which attain to lofty eloquence, and verge on the finest prose poetry. His occasional grossness, truculence, and personality, are undeniable; but they were partly the faults of his age, and sprung partly from the vehemence of his temperament, and the uncertainty of his position. He was, during a large section of his life, *at bay*, and if he had not employed every weapon in his power—his teeth, his horns, and his hoofs —to defend himself, he had inevitably perished. We have not time to follow further Rogers' defence of Luther; suffice it to say, that he does full justice to Luther's honesty of purpose, his deep religious convictions, and his general wisdom and prudence of conduct. His errors were all of the blood and bodily temperament, and none of the spirit. Cajetan called him "a beast with deep-set eyes, and wonderful speculations in his head." If so, he was a noble savage—a king of beasts, and his roar roused Europe from its lethargy, dissolved the dark spell of spiritual slavery, and gave even to Popery all the vitality it has since exhibited. He resembled no class of men more than some of the ancient prophets of Israel. He was no Christian father of the first centuries, sitting cobwebbed among books, no evangelist even of the days of the apostles, going forth, meek and sandalled, with an olive branch in his hand; he reminds us rather, in all but austerity and abstinence, of the terrible Tishbite conflicting with Baal's prophets on Carmel, and fighting with fire the cause of that God who answereth by fire from heaven. But, unlike him, Luther came eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and has been reproached accordingly.

Mr Rogers' next paper is on Leibnitz, whom he justly ranks with the most wonderful men of any age, and who, in that variety of faculty—that plethora of power

—that all-sidedness which distinguished him, resembled a monster rather than a man. A sleepless soul, who often, for weeks together, contented himself with a few hours' slumber in his arm-chair, without ever discomposing his couch! A lonely spirit, with no tender family ties, but entirely devoted to inquiry and investigation, as though he had been one separated Eye, for ever prying into the universe! A wide eclectic catholic mind, intermeddling with all knowledge, and seeking, if possible, to bind mathematics, metaphysics, poetry, philology, all arts and sciences, into the unity of a coronet around his own brow! A soul of prodigious power, as well as of ideal width; the inventor of a new and potent calculus—the father of geology—the originator of a new form of history, which others have since been seeking to fill up—and the author of a heroic, if not successful, effort to grapple with the question of questions—the problem of all ages—"Whence evil, and why permitted in God's world." A genius for whom earth seemed too narrow a sphere, and threescore-and-ten years too short a period, so much had he done ere death, and so much did there seem remaining for him to do—in truth, worthy of an antediluvian life! A mind swarming more than even that of Coleridge with seed-thoughts, the germs of entire encyclopædias in the future; and, if destitute of his magical power of poetic communication, possessing more originality and more practical energy.* A man who read everything and forgot nothing—a living dictionary of all the knowledge which had been accumulated by man—and a living prophecy of all that was yet to be acquired—a universal preface to a universal volume—"a gigantic genius born to grapple with whole libraries." Such is Leibnitz known by all scholars to have been. His two positive achievements, however, the two pillars on which he leans his Samson-like strength, are the differential "Calculus," and the "Theodicée." Mr Rogers' remarks on both these are extremely good. In the vexed question as to the origination of the "Calculus," between Leibnitz and Newton he seems perfectly impartial; and, while eagerly maintaining Newton's originality, he defends Leibnitz with no less strength, from the charge of surreptitious plagiarism from Newton. Both were too rich to require to steal from one another. In "Theodicée," Leibnitz undertook the most daring task ever undertaken by thinker, that of explaining the origin of evil by demonstrating its necessity. That he failed in this, Voltaire has proved, after his manner, in "Candide," the wittiest and wickedest of his works, and Rogers, in a very different spirit and style, has demonstrated here. Indeed, the inevitable eye of common sense sees at a glance that a notion of this earth being the best of all possible worlds is absurd and blasphemous. This system of things falls far below man's ideal, and how can it come up to God's? The shadows resting upon its past and present aspect are so deep, numerous, and terrible, that nothing hitherto, but, first, simple, child-like faith; but, secondly, the prospect of a better time at hand; and, thirdly, the discoveries of Jesus Christ, can convince us that they do not spring either from malignity of intention or weakness of power.[1] The time has not yet come for a true solution of this surpassing problem; which, moreover, though it were given, would not probably find the world ripe for receiving it. Meanwhile, we may, we think, rest firmly upon these convictions—first, that evil exists: is a reality, not a negation or a sham; secondly, that it is not God's; and that, thirdly, it shall yet cease, on earth at least, to be man's. All attempts to go further than this have failed; and failed, we think, from a desire to find a *harmony* and a *unity* where no such things are possible or conceivable.

* Since writing this, we have lighted on a paper by De Quincey, in the "London Magazine," containing an elaborate comparison—coincident with our views—between Leibnitz and Coleridge, "who both united minds distinguished by variety and compass of power to a bodily constitution resembling that of horses. They were centaurs; heroic intellects, with brutal capacities of body."

One is tempted to draw a kind of Plutarchian parallel between Leibnitz and Newton—so illustrious in their respective spheres—and whose contest with one another "in their courses" forms such a painful, yet instructive, incident in the history of science. Newton was more the man of patient, plodding industry; Leibnitz the man of restless genius. Newton's devotion was limited to science and theology; Leibnitz pushed his impetuous way into every department of science, literature, philosophy, and theology, and left traces of his power even in those regions he was not able fully to subdue. Newton studied principally the laws of matter; Leibnitz was ambitious to know these chiefly, that he might reconcile, if not identify, them with the laws of mind. Newton was a theorist—but the most practical of theorists; Leibnitz was the most theoretical of practical thinkers. Newton was the least empirical of all philosophers; Leibnitz one of the most so. Newton shunned all speculation and conjecture which were not forced upon him; Leibnitz revelled in these at all times and on all subjects. Newton was rather timid than otherwise, he groped his way like a blind Atlas, while stepping from world to world; Leibnitz *saw* it as he sailed along in supreme dominion on the wings of his intellectual imagination. Newton was a deeply humble—Leibnitz, a dauntless and daring thinker. Newton *did* his full measure of work, and suggested little more that *he* was likely to do; Leibnitz, to the very close of his life, teemed with promise. The one was a finished, the other a fragmentary production of larger size. The one was a rounded planet, with its corner-stones all complete, and its mechanisms all moving smoothly and harmoniously forward; the other, a star in its nebulous mist, and with all its vast possibilities before it. Newton was awe-struck, by the great and dreadful sea of suns in which he swam, into a mute worshipper of the Maker; Leibnitz sought rather to be his eloquent advocate—

"To assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man."

To Pascal, Mr Rogers proceeds with a peculiar intensity of fellow-feeling. He has himself, sometimes, been compared to Pascal, both in the mirthful and the pensive attributes of his genius. Certainly, his sympathies with him are more thorough and brotherly than with any other of his poetico-metaphysico-theosophical heroes. He that loves most, it has often been said, understands best. And this paper of Rogers sounds the very soul of Pascal. Indeed, that presents fewer difficulties than you might at first suppose. Pascal, with his almost superhuman genius, was the least subtle and most transparent of men. In wisdom almost an angel, he was in simplicity a child. His single-mindedness was only inferior to, nay, seemed a part of, his sublimity. He was from the beginning, and continued to the end, an inspired infant. A certain dash of charlatanry distinguishes Leibnitz, as it does all those monsters of power, The very fact that they can do so much tempts them to pretend to do and to be what they cannot and are not. Possessed of vast knowledge, they affect the airs of omniscience. Thus Leibnitz, in the universal language he sought to construct, in his "swift-going carriages," in his "Pre-established Harmony," and in his "Monads," seemed seeking to *stand behind* the Almighty, to overlook, direct, or anticipate him at his work. Pascal was not a monster; he was a man—nay, a child; although a man of profoundest sagacity, and a child of transcendent genius. Children feel far more than men the mysteries of being, although the gaiety and light-heartedness of their period of life prevent the feeling from oppressing their souls. Who can answer the questions or resolve the doubts of infancy? We remember a dear child, who was taken away to Abraham's bosom at nine years of age, saying that her two grand difficulties were, "Who made God, and How did sin come into the world." These—an uncaused cause, and an originated evil—are the great difficulties of all thinking men, on whom they press more or less hardly in proportion to their calibre and temperament. Pascal, adding

to immense genius a child-like tenderness of heart and purity of conduct, was peculiarly liable to the tremendous doubts and fears forced on us all by the phenomena of man and the universe. He felt them, at once, with all the freshness of infancy, and with all the force of a melancholy manhood. He had in vain tried to solve them. He had asked these dreadful questions at all sciences and philosophies, and got no reply. He had carried them up to heights of speculation, where angels bashful look, and down into depths of reflection, such as few minds but his own have ever sounded, and all was dumb. Height and depth had said, "Not in us." The universe of stars was cold, dead, and tongueless. He felt terrified at, not instructed by it. He said, "The *eternal silence of these infinite spaces affrights me.*" He had turned for a solution from the mysterious materialism of the heavenly bodies to man, and had found in him his doubts driven to contradiction and despair; he seemed a puzzle so perplexed, a chaos so disorderly. He was thus rapidly approaching the gulf of universal scepticism, and was about to drop in like a child over a precipice, when, hark! he heard a voice behind him; and turning round, saw Christianity like a mother following her son to seek and to save him from the catastrophe. Her beauty, her mildness of deportment, her strange yet regal aspect, and the gentleness of those accents of an unknown land, which drop like honey from her lips, convince him that she is divine, and that she is his mother, even before he has heard or understood her message. He loves and believes her, before he knows that she is worthy of all credence and all love. And when, afterwards, he learns in some measure to understand her far foreign speech, he perceives her still more certainly to be a messenger from heaven. She does not, indeed, remove all his perplexities; she allows the deep shadows to rest still on the edge of the horizon, and the precipices to yawn on; but she creates a little space of intense clearness around her child, and she bridges the remoter gloom with the rainbow of hope. She does not completely satisfy, but she soothes, his mind, saying to him as he kneels before her, and as she blesses her noble son, "Remain on him, ye rainbowed clouds, ye gilded doubts, by your pressure purify him still more, and prepare him for higher work, deeper thought, and clearer revelation; teach him the littleness of man and the greatness of God, the insignificance of man's life on earth and the grandeur of his future destiny, and impress him with this word of the Book above all its words—'That which thou knowest not now, thou shalt hereafter *know, if* thou wilt humble thyself, and become as a little child.'" Thus we express in parable the healthier portion of Pascal's history. That latterly the clouds returned after the rain, that the wide rainbow faded into a dim segment, and that his mother's face shone on him through a haze of uncertainty and tears, seems certain; but this we are disposed to account for greatly from physical causes. By studying too hard, and neglecting his bodily constitution, he became morbid to a degree which amounted, we think, to semi-mania. In this sad state, the more melancholy because attended by the full possession of his intellectual powers, his most dismal doubts came back at times, his most cherished convictions shook as with palsy, the craving originally created by his mathematical studies for demonstrative evidence on all subjects, became diseasedly strong, and nothing but piety and prayer saved him from shoreless and bottomless scepticism. Indeed, his great unfinished work on the evidences of Christianity seems to have been intended to convince himself quite as much as to convince others. But he has long ago passed out of this mysterious world; and now, we trust, sees "light in God's light clearly." If his doubts were of an order so large and deep, that they did not "go out even to prayer and fasting," he was honest in them; they did not spring either from selfishness of life or pride of intellect; and along with some of the child's doubts, the child's heart remained in him to the last.

His "Thoughts"—what can be said

adequately of those magnificent fragments? They are rather subjects *for* thoughts than for words. They remind us of aërolites, the floating fractions of a glorious world. Some of them, to use an expression applied to Johnson's sayings, "have been rolled and polished in his great mind like pebbles in the ocean." He has wrought them, and finished them, as carefully as if each thought were a book. Others of them are slighter in thinking, and more careless in style. But, as a whole, the collection forms one of the profoundest and most living of works. The "Thoughts" are seed-pearl, and on some of them volumes might be, and have been, written. We specially admire those which reflect the steadfast but gentle gloom of the author's habit of mind, the long tender twilight, not without its stars and gleams of coming day, which shadowed his genius, and softened always his grandeur into pathos. He is very far from being a splenetic or misanthropic spirit. Nothing personal is ever allowed either to shade or to brighten the tissue of his meditations. He stands a passionless spirit, as though he were disembodied, and had forgot his own name and identity, on the shore which divides the world of man from the immensity of God, and he pauses and ponders, wonders and worships there. He sees the vanity and weakness of all attempts which have hitherto been made to explain the difficulties and reconcile the contradictions of our present system. Yet, without any evidence—for all quasi-evidence melts in a moment before his searching eye into nothing—he believes it to be connected with one Infinite Mind; and this springs in him, not as Cousin pretends, from a determination blindly to believe, but from a whisper in his own soul, which tells him warmly to love. But it is not, after all, the matter in the universe which he regards with affection, it is the God who is passing through it, and lending it the glory of his presence. Mere matter he tramples on and despises. It is just so much brute light and heat. He does not, and cannot, believe that the throne of God and of the Lamb is made of the same materials, only a little sublimated, as yonder dunghill or the crest of yonder serpent. He is an intense spiritualist. He cries out to this proud process of developing matter, this wondrous Something sweltering out suns in its progress—"Thou mayest do thy pleasure on me; thou mayest crush me, but I will *know* that thou art crushing me, whilst thou shalt crush blindly. I should be conscious of the defeat; thou shouldst not be conscious of the victory." Bold, certainly, was the challenge of this little piece of inspired humanity, this frail, slender, invalid, but divinely-gifted man, to the enormous mass of uninspired and uninstinctive matter amid which he lived. He did not believe in law, life, or blind mechanism, as the all-in-all of the system of things. He believed rather in Tennyson's Second Voice—

> "A little whisper breathing low,
> I may not speak of what I know."

He *felt*, without being able to *prove*, that God was in this place.

Pascal's result of thought was very much the same as John Foster's, although the process by which he reached it was different. Pascal had turned, so to speak, the tub of matter upside down, and found it empty. Foster had simply touched its sides, and heard the ring which proclaimed that there was nothing within. The one reached at once, and by intuition, what was to the other the terminus of a thousand lengthened intellectual researches. Both had lost all hope in scientific discoveries and metaphysical speculations, as likely to bring us a step nearer to the Father of Spirits, and were cast, therefore, as the orphans of Nature, upon the mercies and blessed discoveries of the Divine Word. Both, however, felt that THAT, too, has only very partially revealed Truth; that the Bible itself is a "glass in which we see darkly;" and that the key of the Mysteries of Man and the Universe is as yet in the keeping of Death. Both, particularly Foster, expected too much, as it appears to us, from the *instant* transition of the soul from this to another world. Both clothed their gloomy thoughts, thoughts "charged with a thunder" which

was never fully evolved, in the highest eloquence which pensive thought can produce when wedded to poetry. But, while Pascal's eloquence is of a grave, severe, monumental cast, Foster's is expressed in richer imagery, and is edged by a border of fiercer sarcasm; for, although the author of the "Thoughts" was the author of the "Provincial Letters," and had wit and sarcasm at will, they are generally free from bitterness, and are rarely allowed to intermingle with his serious meditations. (In these remarks, we refer to Foster's posthumous journal rather than to his essays.) Both felt that Christianity was yet in bud, and looked forward with fond yet trembling anticipation to the coming of a "new and most mighty dispensation," when it shall, under a warmer and nearer sun, expand into a tree, the leaves of which shall be for the healing of the nations, and the shade of which shall be heaven begun on earth. We must say that we look on the religion of such men, clinging each to his plank amid the weltering wilderness of waves, and looking up for the coming of the day—a religion so deep-rooted, so sad as regards the past and present, so sanguine in reference to the future, so doubtful of man and human means, so firm in its trust on divine power and promise—with far more interest and sympathy than on that commonplace, bustling Christianity which abounds, with its stereotyped arguments, its cherished bigotry and narrowness, its shallow and silly gladness, its belief in well-oiled machineries, Evangelical Alliances, Exeter Hall cheers, the power of money, and the voice of multitudes. True religion implies struggle, doubt, sorrow, and these are indeed the main constituents of its grandeur. It is just the sigh of a true and holy heart for a better and brighter sphere. In the case of Pascal and Foster, this sigh becomes audible to the whole earth, and is re-echoed through all future ages.

It was during the brief sunshine hour of his life that Pascal wrote his "Provincial Letters." On these, Rogers dilates with much liveliness and power. He can meet his author at all points, and is equally at home when taking a brisk morning walk with him along a l summit, the echoes repeating their s of joyous laughter; and when paci midnight the shades of a gloomy discoloured by a waning moon, v seems listening to catch their whisp they talk of death, evil, and et The "Provincial Letters" are, or whole, the most brilliant collecti controversial letters extant. They not the rounded finish, the concenti the red-hot touches of sarcasm, an brief and occasional bursts of inv darkening into sublimity, which d guish the letters of Junius. Nor they the profound *asides* of reflecti the impatient power of passion, a masses of poetical imagery, to be in Burke's "Letter to a Noble Lord" "Letters on a Regicide Peace;" bu excel these and all epistolary write dexterity of argument, in power of in light, hurrying, scorching satire, running along the ground," in pi motion, and in Attic salt and Att gance of style. He has held up his s to immortal scorn, and painted tis the most contemptible and ludicrou tudes—on a Grecian urn. He ha served those wasps and flies in the amber. Has he not honoured full those wretched sophisters, by deta them with the golden shafts of s, Had not the broad hoof of Pan, s club of Hercules, been a more appro weapon for crushing and mangling into mire? But, had he employed co weapons, although equally effective i stroying his enemies, he had gained glory for himself. As it is, he has fou one of his best claims to immortality u the slaughter of these despicabilities, the knights of old, who won their lau in clearing the forests from wild swine similar brutes. And, be it remembe that, though the Jesuits individually w for the most part contemptible, their tem was a very formidable one, and quired the whole strength of a m hand to expose it.

We close this short notice of Pa with rather melancholy emotions. A m so gifted in the prodigality of heaven, a

adequ[illegible]t-lived (just thirty-nine at his
ment[illegible] A man so pure and good, and
thou[illegible]nd of his days so miserable! A
us [illegible] bright, and that set amid such
a gl[illegible]louds! A genius so strong and
[illegible]furnished, and yet the slave in
m[illegible]tings of a despicable superstition!
h[illegible]alified above his fellows to have
He[illegible]d the boundaries of human
as c[illegible], and to have led the world on in
Othe[illegible] and goodness, and yet who did
and [illegible], and died believing that nothing
whole[illegible]th being done! One of the great-
profou[illegible]nkers and finest writers in the
The [illegible]and yet despising fame, and at
some [illegible]thing all literature except the
have [illegible] Book of Life! Able to pass from
mire [illegible]n to the Beersheba of universal
but ge[illegible]dge, and forced to exclaim at the
mind, the journey, "All is barren!" Was
out its[illegible]his mad or wise—right or wrong?
which [illegible]ink the truth lies between. He
always[illegible]t and wise in thinking that man
very fa[illegible]ude at the most, know little at
thropic[illegible]le k[illegible] and must be imperfect at
allowe[illegible]ow fi[illegible]t he was wrong and mad in
tissue [illegible]rsating to know, to do, and to be
passion[illegible]abovithin his own power, as well
embodi[illegible]scurging his fellow-men to know,
and ide[illegible].o the less within theirs. Like
the wo[illegible]goner in fable, and Foster in
God, an[illegible]while calling on Hercules to come
and wo[illegible]m the cloud, he neglected to set
and w[illegible]ulder to the wheel. He should
hither[illegible]ine both, and thus, if he had not
culti[illegible]ed the grand purpose of progress
our [illegible]ch as he wished, he would at least
evid[illegible] delivered his own soul, secured a
mon[illegible]er peace in his heart, and in working
thir[illegible], would have suffered less. While
one [illegible]ometheus *was* chained to his rock,
hin[illegible]al voluntarily chained himself to his
ter[illegible]e chain of an iron-spiked girdle, and
a w[illegible]e mused sublime musings, and uttered
wa[illegible]odious groans, till merciful Death re[illegible]
the[illegible]ed him. He was one of the very few
gar[illegible]nchmen who have combined imagina-
pas[illegible] and reverence, with fancy, intellect,
glor[illegible] wit.

In his next paper, Mr Rogers ap[illegible]roaches another noble and congenial [illegible]ome—Plato, and his master Socrates. [illegible] is a Greek meeting a Greek, and the tug of war, of course, comes—a generous competition of kindred genius. We have read scores of critiques—by Landor, by Shelley, by Bulwer, by Sir Daniel Sandford, by Emerson, and others—on these redoubted heroes of the Grecian philosophy; but we forget, if any of them excel this of our author, in clearness of statement, discrimination, sympathy with the period, and appreciation of the merits of the two magnificent men. Old Socrates, with his ugly face, his snub nose, his strong head for standing liquor, his restless habits, his subtle irony, the inimitable dialogue on which he made his enemies to slide down, as on a mountain-side of ice, from the heights of self-consequent security to the depths of defeat and exposure; his sublime common sense; his subtle, yet homely dialectics, opening up mines of gold by the wayside, and getting the gods to sit on the roof of the house; his keen raillery, his power of sophisticating sophists, and his profound knowledge of his own nescience, is admirably daguerreotyped. With equal power, the touches lent to him by the genius of his disciple are discriminated from the native traits. Plato, to say the least of it, has *coloured* the calotype of Socrates with the tints of his own fine and fiery imagination; or he has acted as a painter, when he puts a favourite picture in the softest and richest light; or as a poet, when he visits a beautiful scene by moonlight; or as a lover, when he gently lifts up the image of his mistress across the line which separated it from perfection. We often hear of people *throwing* themselves into such and such a subject; there is another process still—that of *adding* one's-self to such and such a character. You see a person, who, added to yourself, would make, you think, a glorious being, and you proceed to idealise accordingly; you stand on his head, and outtower the tallest; you club your brains with his, and are wiser than the wisest; you add the heat of your heart to his, and produce a very furnace of love. Thus Solomon might have written David's romantic history, and given the latter, in addition to his courage, sincerity and

lyric genius, his own voluptuous fancy and profound acquirements. All biographers, indeed, possessed of any strong individuality themselves, act very much in this way when narrating the lives of kindred spirits. And, certainly, it was thus that Plato dealt with Socrates. The Platonic Socrates is a splendid composite, including the sagacity, strength, theological acumen, and grand modesty, as of the statue of a kneeling god, which distinguished the master; and the philosophic subtlety, the high imagination, the flowing diction, and the exquisite refinement of the disciple. Yet even Socrates in the picture of Plato is not, for a moment, to be compared to the Carpenter of Nazareth, as represented by his biographer, John the fisherman of Galilee. We shall quote, by and by, the fine passage in which Mr Rogers draws the comparison between the two.

To Plato as a thinker and writer ample justice is done. Perhaps too little is said against that slip-slop which in his writings so often mingles with the sublimity. They are often, verily, strange symposia which he describes — a kind of *Noctes Ambrosianæ*, swarming here with bacchanalian babblement, and there with sentences and sayings which might have been washed down with nectar. They are intensely typical of the ancient Grecian mind, of its heights and its depths, its unnatural vices and its lofty ideals of art. In their conception of beauty, the Greeks approximated the ideal, but their views of God and of man were exceedingly imperfect. Hence their disgusting vices; hence their sacrifice of everything to the purposes of art; hence the sensuality of their genius when compared to that of the Gothic nations; hence the resistance offered by their philosophers to Christianity, which appeared to them "foolishness;" hence Platonism, the highest effort of their philosophy, seems less indigenous to Greece than Aristotelianism, and resembles an exotic transplanted from Egypt or Palestine. Except in Plato and Æschylus, there is little approach in the productions of the Greek genius to moral sublimity or to a true religious feeling. Among the prose writers of Greece, Aristotle and Demosthenes more truly reflected the character of the national mind than Plato. They were exceedingly ingenious and artistic, the one in his criticism, and the other in his oratory, but neither was capable of the lowest flights of Plato's magnificent prose-poetry. Aristotle was, as Macaulay calls him, the "acutest of human beings;" but it was a cold, needle-eyed acuteness. As a critic, his great merit lay in deducing the principles of the epic from the perfect example set by Homer, like a theologian forming a perfect system of morality from the life of Christ; but this, though a useful process, and one requiring much talent, is not of the highest order even of intellectual achievements, and has nothing at all of the creative in it. It is but the work of an index-maker on a somewhat larger scale. Demosthenes, Mr Rogers, with Lord Brougham and most other critics, vastly overrates. His speeches, as delivered by himself, must have been overwhelming in their immediate effect, but really constitute, when read, morsels as dry and sapless as we ever tried to swallow. They are destitute of that "action, action, action," on which he laid so much stress, and having lost it, they have lost nearly all. They have a good deal of clear pithy statement, and some striking questions and apostrophes, but have no imagery, no depth of thought, no grasp, no grandeur, no genius. Lord Brougham's speeches we have called "law-papers on fire:" the speeches of Demosthenes are law-papers with much less fire. To get at their merit, we must apply the well-known rule of Charles James Fox. He used to ask if such and such a speech read well; "if it did, it was a bad speech, if it did not, it was probably good." On this principle the orations of Demosthenes must be the best in the world, since they are about the dullest reading in it.

Far otherwise with the golden sentences of Plato. Dry argument, half hot with passion, is all Demosthenes can furnish. Plato

"Has gifts in their most splendid va-

riety and most harmonious combinations; rich alike in powers of invention and acquisition; equally massive and light; vigorous and muscular, yet pliable and versatile; master at once of thought and expression, in which originality and subtlety of intellect are surrounded by all the ministering aids of imagination, wit, humour, and eloquence, and the structure of his mind resembles some masterpiece of classic architecture, in which the marble columns rise from their deep foundation exquisitely fashioned and proportioned, surmounted with elaborate and ornamented capitals, and supporting an entablature inscribed with all forms of the beautiful.

"Plato's style," Mr Rogers proceeds, "is unrivalled; he wielded at will all the resources of the most copious, flexible, and varied instrument of thought through which the mind of man has ever yet breathed the music of eloquence. Not less severely simple and refined when he pleases than Pascal, between whom and Plato many resemblances existed—as in beauty of intellect, in the delicacy of their wit, in aptitude for abstract science, and in moral wisdom; the Grecian philosopher is capable of assuming every mood of thought, and of adopting the tone, imagery, and diction appropriate to each. Like Pascal, he can be by turns profound, sublime, pathetic, sarcastic, playful; but with a far more absolute command over all the varieties of manner and style. He could pass, by the most easy and rapid transitions, from the majestic eloquence which made the Greeks say, that if Jupiter had spoken the language of mortals he would have spoken in that of Plato, to that homely style of illustration and those highly idiomatic modes of expression which mark the colloquial manner of his Socrates, and which, as Alcibiades in his eulogium observes, might induce a stranger to say that the talk of the sage was all about shoemakers and tailors, carpenters and braziers."

We promised to quote also his closing paragraph. Here it is, worthy in every respect of the author of the "Eclipse of Faith," and equal to its best passages:—

"We certainly hold the entire dramatic projection and representation of Socrates in the pages of Plato, to be one of the most wonderful efforts of the human mind. In studying him, it is impossible that his character as a teacher of ethics, and his life-like mode of representation, should not suggest to us *another character* yet more wonderfully depicted, and by the same most difficult of all methods—that of dramatic evolution by discourse and action; of one who taught a still purer, sublimer, and more consistent ethics, pervaded by a more intense spirit of humanity, of one whose love for our race was infinitely deeper and more tender, who stands perfectly free from those foibles which history attributes to the real Socrates, and from that too Protean facility of manners which, though designed by Plato as a compliment to the philosophic flexibility of *his* character of Socrates, really so far assimilated him with mere vulgar humanity; of one, too, whose sublime and original character is not only exhibited with the most wonderful dramatic skill, but in a style as unique as the character it embodies—a style of simple majesty, which, unlike that of Plato, is capable of being readily translated into every language under heaven; of one whose life was the embodiment of that virtue which Plato affirmed would entrance all hearts if seen, and whose death throws the prison-scenes of the 'Phædo' utterly into the shade; of one, lastly, whose picture has arrested the admiring gaze of many who have believed it to be only a picture. Now, if we feel that the portraiture of Socrates in the pages of Plato involved the very highest exercise of the highest dramatic genius, and that the cause was no more than commensurate with the effect, it is a question which may well occupy the attention of a *philosopher*, how it came to pass that, in one of the obscurest periods of the history of an obscure people, in the dregs of their literature and the lowest depths of superstitious dotage, so sublime a conception should have been so sublimely exhibited; how it was that the noblest truths found an oracle in the lips of the

grossest ignorance, and the maxims of universal charity advocates in the hearts of the most selfish of narrow-minded bigots; in a word, who could be the more than Plato (or rather the many each more than Plato), who drew that radiant portrait, of which it may be truly said, 'that a far greater than Socrates is here!'"

Passing over a very ingenious paper on the "Structure of the English Language," we come to one on the "British Pulpit," some of the statements in which are weighty and powerful, but some of which we are compelled to controvert. Mr Rogers begins by deploring the want of eloquence and of effect in the modern pulpit. There is, undoubtedly, too much reason for this complaint, although we think that in the present day it is not so much eloquence that men *desiderate* in preaching, as real instruction, living energy, and wide variety of thought and illustration. Mr Rogers says very little about the *substance* of sermons, and, in what he does say, seems to incline to that principle of strait-lacing which we thought had been nearly exploded. No doubt every preacher should preach the main doctrines of the gospel, but, if he confine himself exclusively to these, he will limit his own sphere of power and influence. Why should he not preach the great general moralities as well? Why should he not tell, upon occasion, great political, metaphysical, and literary truths to his people, turning them, as they are so susceptible of being turned, to religious account? It will not do to tell us that preachers must follow the apostles in every respect. Christ alone was a perfect model, and how easy and diversified his discourses! He had seldom any *text*. He spake of subjects as diverse from each other as are the deserts of Galilee from the streets of Jerusalem; the summit of Tabor from the tower of Siloam; the cedar of Lebanon from the hyssop springing out of the wall. He touched the political affairs of Judea, the passing incidents of the day, the transient controversies and heartburnings of the Jewish sects, with a finger as firm and as luminous as he did the principles of morality and of religion. Hence, in part, the superiority and the success of his teaching. It was a wide and yet not an indefinite and baseless thing. It swept the circumference of nature and of man, and then radiated on the cross as on a centre. It gathered an immense procession of things, thoughts, and feelings, and led them through Jerusalem and along the foot of Calvary. It bent all beings and subjects into its grand purpose, transfiguring them as they stooped before it. It was this catholic *eclectic* feature in Christ's teaching which, while it made many cry out "Never man spake like this man," has created also some certain misconceptions of its character. Many erroneously think that he was at bottom nothing more than a pantheistic poet, because he shed on all objects—on the lilies of the valley, the salt of the sea, the thorns of the wilderness, the trees of the field, the rocks of the mountain, and the sands of the sea-shore—that strange and glorious light which he brought with him to earth, and poured around him as from the wide wings of an angel, as from the all-beautifying beams of dawn.

We think that, if Christ's teaching be taken as the test and pattern, Mr Rogers limits the range of preaching too much when he says its principal characteristics should be "practical reasoning and strong emotion." Preaching is not a mere hortatory matter. Sermons are the better of applications, but they should not be *all* application. Ministers should remember to address mankind and their audiences as a whole, and should seek here to instruct their judgments, and there to charm their imagination; here to allure, and there to alarm; here to calm, and there to arouse; here to reason away their doubts and prejudices, and there to awaken their emotions. Mr Rogers disapproves of discussing first principles in the pulpit, and says, that "the atheist and deist are rarely found in Christian congregations." We wish we could believe this. If there are no avowed atheists or deists in our churches, there are, we fear, many whose minds are

grievously unsettled and at sea on such subjects, and shall they be altogether neglected in the daily ministrations? Of what use to speak to them of justification by faith, who think there is nothing to be believed, or of the *New* Birth, who do not believe in the *Old*, but deem themselves fatherless children in a forsaken world? We think him decidedly too severe, also, in his condemnation of the use of scientific and literary language in the pulpit. Pedantry, indeed, and darkening counsel by technical language, we abhor, but elegant and scholarly diction may be combined with simplicity and clearness, and has a tendency to elevate the minds and refine the tastes of those who listen to it. It is of very little use coming down, as it is called, to men's level; now-a-days, if you do so, you will get nothing but contempt for your pains —you cannot, indeed, be too intelligible, but you may be so while using the loftiest imagery and the richest language. Chalmers never "came down to men's level," and yet his discourses were understood and felt by the humblest of his audience, when by the energy of his genius and the power of his sympathies he lifted them *up to his*.

Mr Rogers thinks that all preachers aspiring to power and usefulness will "abhor the ornate and the florid," and yet it is remarkable that the most powerful and the most useful, too, of preachers have been the most ornate and florid. Who more ornate than Isaiah? Who more in figures and parables than Jesus? Chrysostom, of the "golden mouth," belonged to the same school. South sneers at Jeremy Taylor, and Rogers very unworthily re-echoes the sneer; but what comparison between [illegible]th the sneerer, and Taylor the sneered [illegible]nius or in genuine power and [illegible]ty? To how many a cultivated [illegible] has Jeremy Taylor made religion [illegible]ive and dear, which had hated and [illegible]spised it before? Who more florid than Isaac Taylor, and what writer of this century has done more to recommend Christianity to certain classes of the community? [illegible]r, *to be sure*, is no preacher, but who have been or are the most popular and most powerful preachers of the age? Chalmers, Irving, Melville, Hall; and amid their many diversities in point of intellect, opinion, and style, they agree in this—that they all abound in figurative language and poetical imagery. And if John Foster failed in preaching, it was certainly not from want of imagination, which formed, indeed, the staple of all his best discourses. Mr Rogers, to be sure, permits a "moderate use of the imagination;" but, strange to say, it is the men who have made a *large* and *lavish* use of it in preaching who have most triumphantly succeeded. Of course, they have all made their imagination subservient to a high purpose; but we demur to his statement that no preacher should ever employ his imagination merely to delight us. He should not, indeed, become constantly the minister of delight; but he should, and must occasionally, in gratifying himself with his own fine fancies, give an innocent and intense gratification to others, and having thus delighted his audience, mere gratitude on their part will prepare them for listening with more attention and interest to his solemn appeals at the close. He says that the splendid description in the "Antiquary" of a sunset would be altogether out of place in the narrative by a naval historian of two fleets separated on the eve of engagement by a storm, or in any serious narrative or speech, forgetting that the "Antiquary" professes to be a serious narrative, and that Burke, in his speeches and essays, has often interposed in critical points of narration descriptions quite as long and as magnificent, which, nevertheless, so far from exciting laughter, produce the profoundest impression, blending, as they do, the energies and effects of fiction and poetry with those of prose and fact.

That severely simple and *agonistic* style, which Mr Rogers recommends so strongly, has been seldom practised in Britain, except in the case of Baxter, with transcendent effect. At all events, the *writings* of those who have followed it, have not had a tithe of the influence

which more genial and fanciful authors have exerted. For one who reads South, ten thousand revel in Jeremy Taylor. Howe, a very imaginative, and rather diffuse writer, has supplanted Baxter in general estimation. In Scotland, while the dry sermons of Ebenezer Erskine are neglected, the lively and fanciful writings of his brother Ralph have still a considerable share of popularity. The works of Chalmers and Cumming, destined as both are in due time to oblivion, are preserved in their present life, by what in the first is real, and in the second a semblance of imagination. Of the admirable writings of Dr Harris and of Hamilton, we need not speak. Latimer, South, and Baxter, whom Rogers ranks so highly, are not *classics*. Even Jonathan Edwards and Butler, with all their colossal talent, are now little read, on account of their want of imagination. The same vital deficiency has doomed the sermons of Tillotson, Atterbury, Sherlock, and Clarke. Indeed, in order to refute Mr Rogers, we have only to recur to his own words, quoted above—"this faculty—fancy, namely—is incomparably the most important for the vivid and attractive exhibition of truth to the minds of men." It follows, that, since the great object of preaching is to exhibit truth to the minds of men, fancy is the faculty most needful to the preacher, and that the want of it is the most fatal of deficiencies. In fact, although a few preachers have, through the agonistic methods, by pure energy and passion, produced great effects, these have been confined chiefly to their spoken speech, have not been transferred to their published writings, and have speedily died away. It is the same in other kinds of oratory. Fox's eloquence, which studied only immediate effect, perished with him, and Pitt's likewise. Burke's, being at once highly imaginative and profoundly wise, lives, and must live for ever.

We have not room to enlarge on some other points in the paper. We think Mr Rogers lays far too much stress on the *time* a preacher should take in composing his sermons. Those preachers who spend all the week in finical polishing of periods, and intense elaboration of paragraphs, are not the most efficient or esteemed. A well-furnished mind, animated by enthusiasm, will throw forth in a few hours a sermon incomparably superior, in force, freshness, and energy, to those discourses which are slowly and toilsomely built up. It may be different sometimes with sermons which are meant for publication. Yet some of the finest published sermons in literature have been written at a heat.

From the entire second volume of these admirable essays we must abstain. "Reason and Faith" would itself justify a long separate article. Nor can we do any more than allude, at present, to that noble "Meditation among the Tombs of Literature," which closes the first volume, and which he entitles the "Vanity and Glory of Literature." It is full of sad truth, and its style and thinking are way worthy of its author's genius.

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